WITH 1986 RUGER CATALOGUE

# American West

The land and its people

Display until Aug. 25, 1986

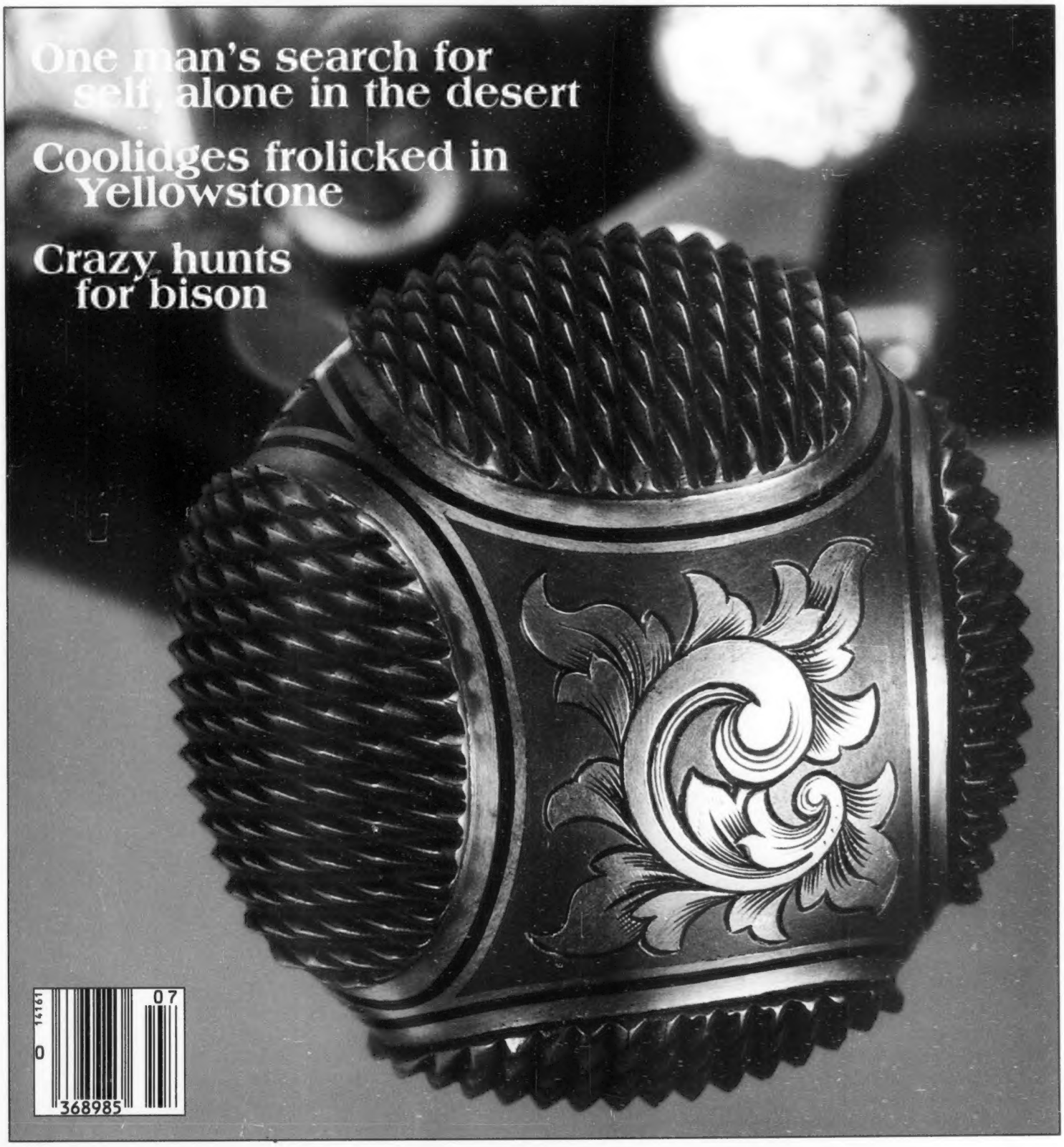
July/August 1986 $3

## Arms to art: flowering of an American craft

One man's search for self, alone in the desert

Coolidges frolicked in Yellowstone

Crazy hunts for bison



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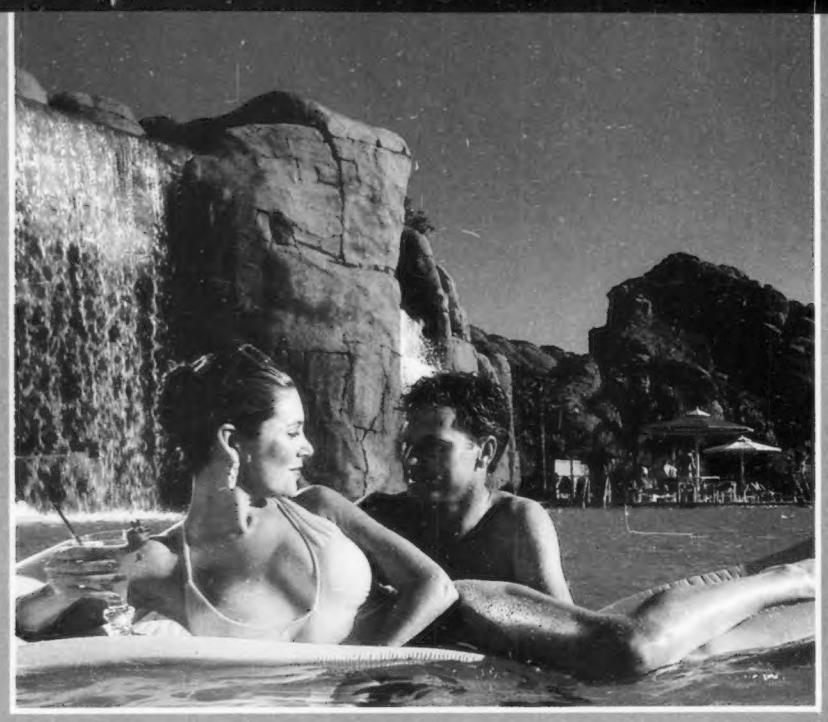

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In 1886, President Grover Cleveland dedicated the Statue of Liberty, a gift from France honoring our democratic traditions. Today, the Statue of Liberty is being restored. In July, 1986, her centennial, she will be rededicated. The Danbury Mint is offering this beautiful sculpture in honor of this historic occasion.

**Fully clad in copper from the actual Statue of Liberty**

As the Statue of Liberty is refurbished, some of the copper must be removed. This has been made available to the Danbury Mint, and is being incorporated into each sculpture. Each will be fully clad in copper which until very recently was part of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor! Moreover, the copper will be finished to replicate the weathered green patina of the venerable Lady.

**Handcrafted with precision in American pewter**

Each sculpture is meticulously crafted from rich American pewter, unsurpassed in its dignity. No other metal could have imparted to this sculpture the same noble bearing and stateliness.

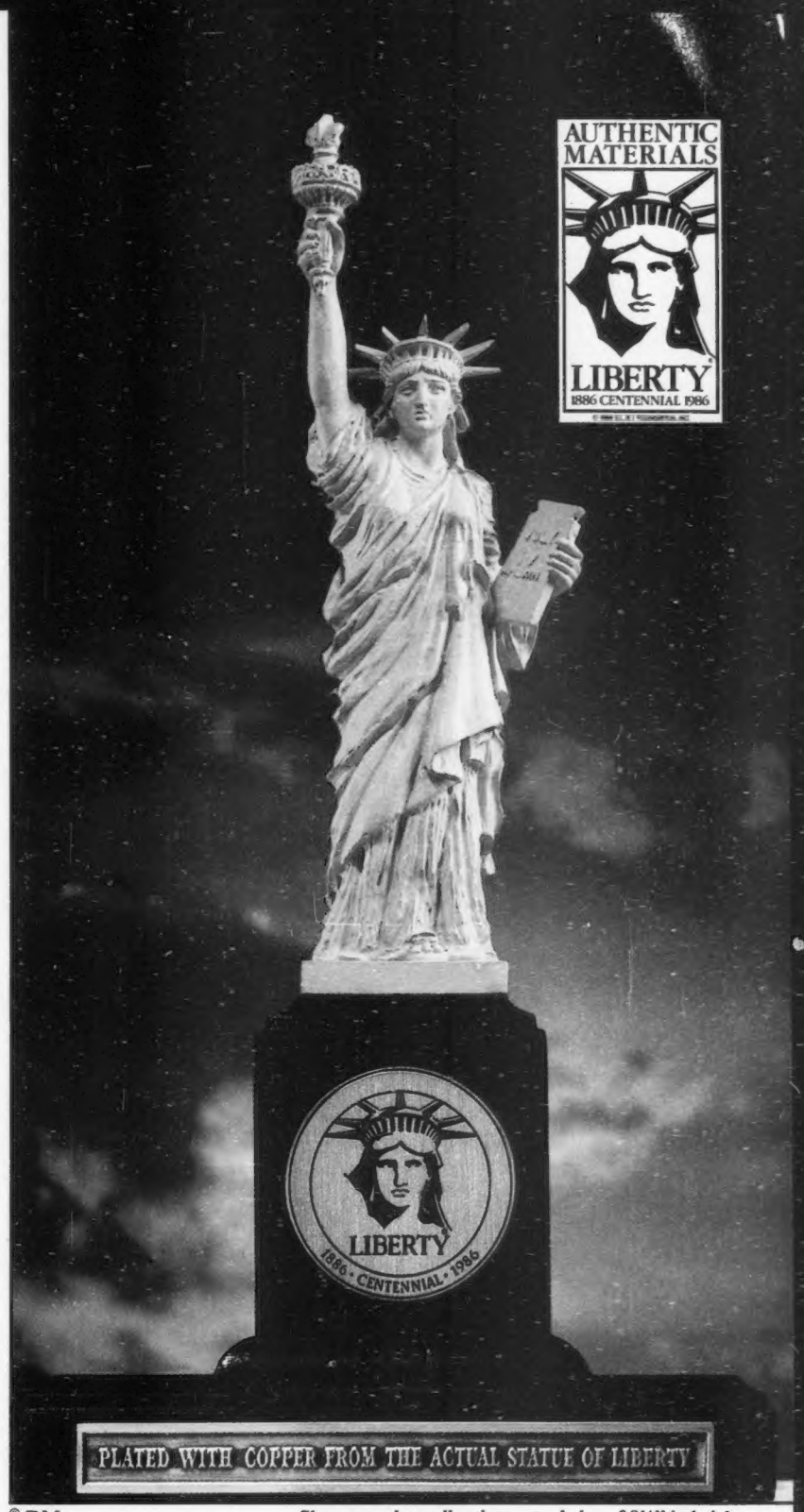
**Your purchase contributes to the Statue of Liberty's restoration**

You'll be pleased to know that a percentage of the sculpture's purchase price will be contributed to the Statue of Liberty — Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. Consequently, your purchase contributes to the Statue of Liberty's restoration. Accompanying your sculpture will be a Certificate of Authentic Materials, signed by Lee A. Iacocca, the Foundation's chairman.

**A meaningful and unique heirloom**

The original issue price of *The Statue of Liberty Pewter Sculpture* — complete with hardwood pedestal — is $150. This is an exceptional value when you consider that its authentic copper could make it irreplaceable in the years to come.

You will always be remembered for bringing this magnificent heirloom into your family. Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity, send in your reservation today!

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Shown much smaller than actual size of 9½" in height.

RESERVATION APPLICATION

The Danbury Mint
47 Richards Avenue
P.O. Box 5245
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THE STATUE OF LIBERTY
PEWTER SCULPTURE

Please return promptly.

Please accept my reservation for *The Statue of Liberty Pewter Sculpture*, a pewter sculpture of the Statue of Liberty, clad in copper from the actual Statue. The sculpture comes with a hardwood pedestal at no extra charge.

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*Allow eight to twelve weeks after payment for shipment.* U209

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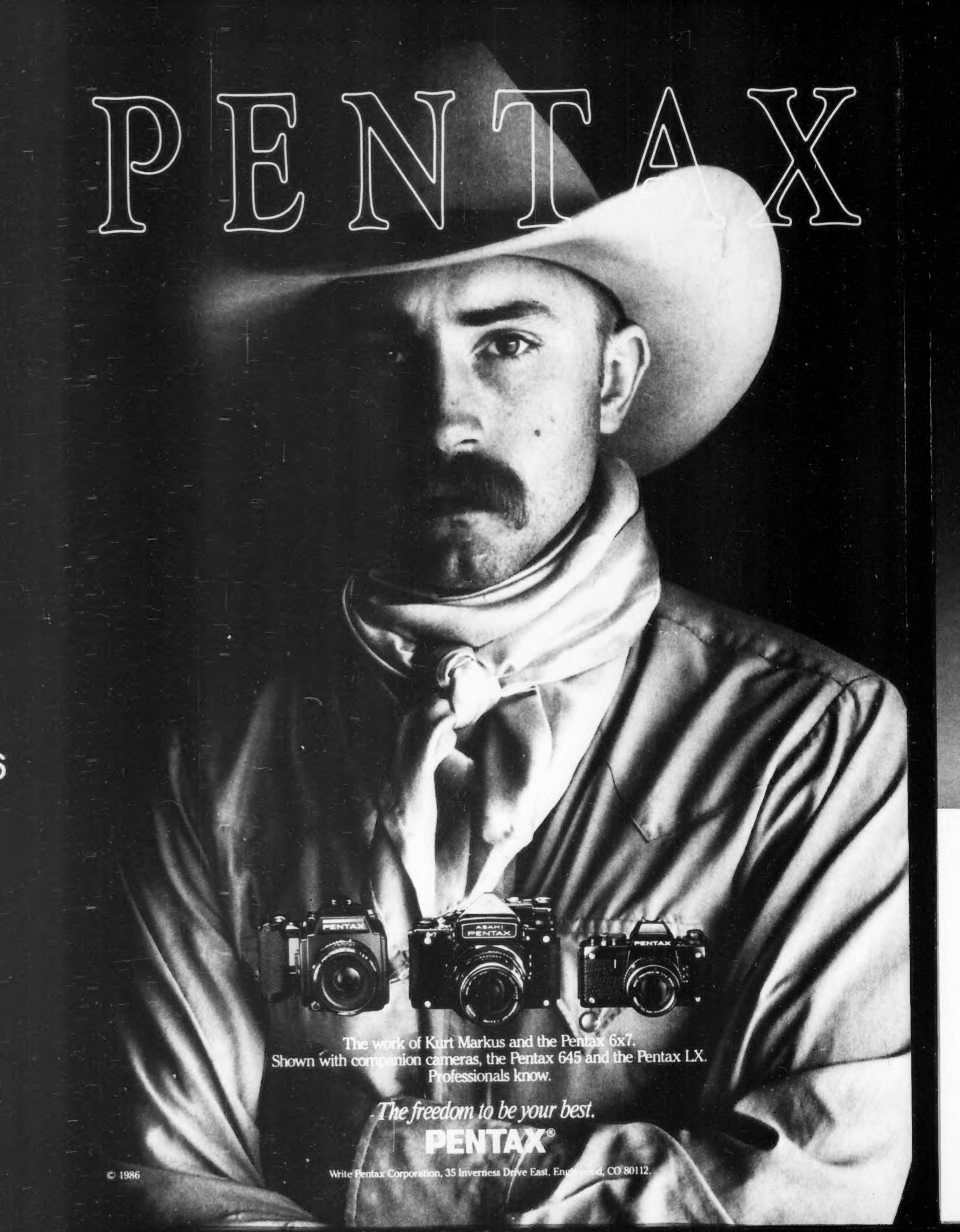


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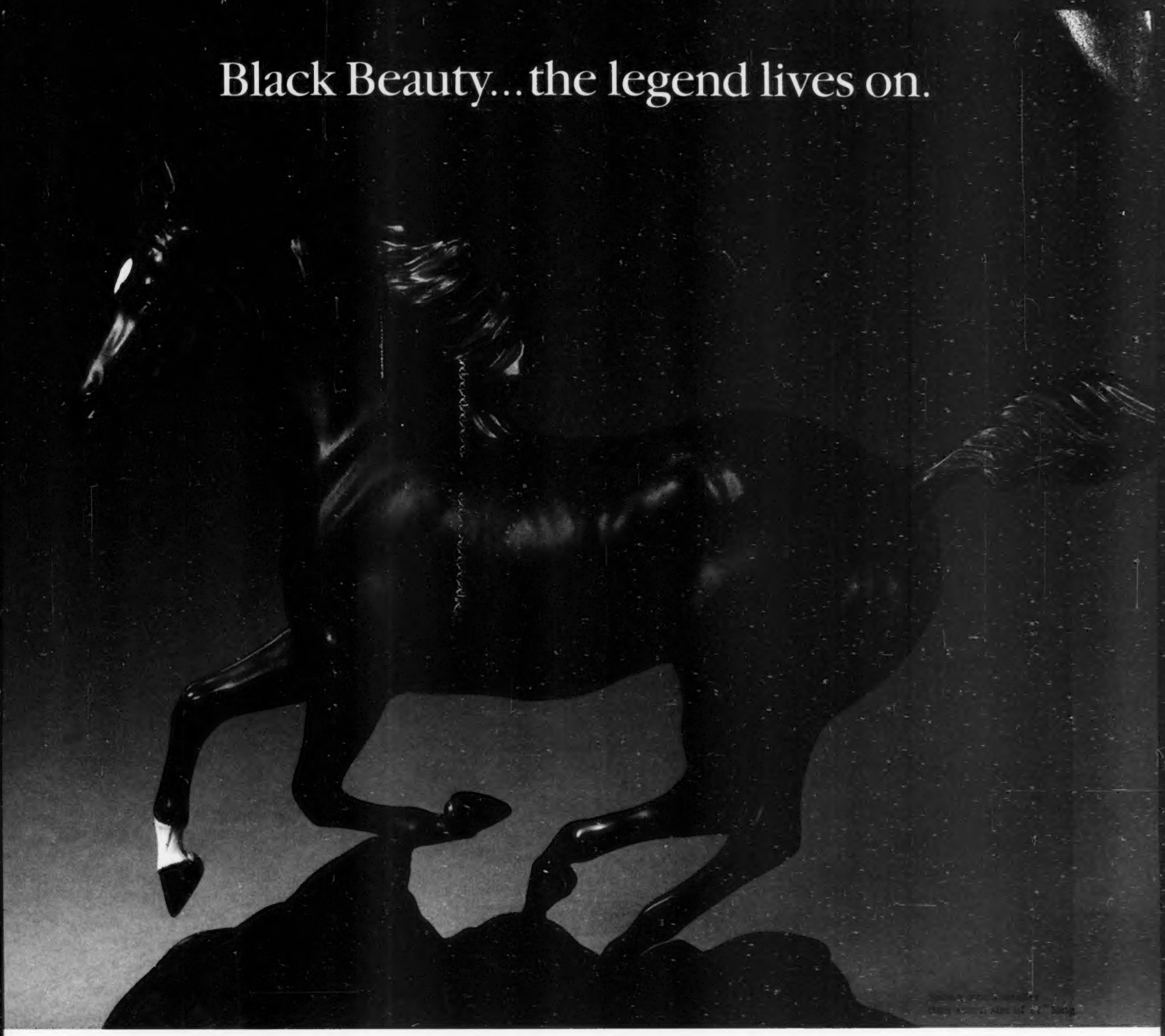
# Black Beauty... the legend lives on.



## Handcrafted in rare black porcelain. An original, by today's foremost equestrian sculptor.

Running wild and free... galloping through his meadow home—Black Beauty is as beloved today as when he first bounded from the pages of the celebrated novel a century ago.

Now, the most gifted equestrian sculptor of our time has captured Black Beauty's irrepressible spirit and majesty—as never before—in a magnificent new porcelain sculpture.

This original work of art has been created by Pamela du Boulay of Great Britain, whose outstanding portrayals of the horse are sought-after throughout the world. And are included in many important private collections, including that of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Each sculpture will be *individually hand-cast and hand-finished.* Each will be crafted entirely in rare black porcelain—a medium so difficult to craft that few of the world's leading porcelain houses even attempt it. What's more, the unusual markings on the forehead and foot of "Black Beauty" will be hand-painted in pure white—a striking contrast to the rich black bisque.

Measuring a full 11 inches in length, this exciting imported sculpture is available *exclusively* from The Franklin Mint and only by direct order. The issue price is $150, payable in 5 convenient monthly installments of $30 each. A Certificate of Authenticity and a specially prepared reference folder will be sent with your sculpture.

To acquire "Black Beauty," mail the accompanying Order Form by August 31st.

ORDER FORM

13

***Please mail by August 31, 1986.***
***Limit: One sculpture per order.***

The Franklin Mint
Franklin Center, Pennsylvania 19091

Please accept my order for "Black Beauty," an original sculpture by Pamela du Boulay, to be crafted for me in rare black porcelain.

I need send no money now. I will be billed in 5 monthly installments of $30.* each, with the first payment due when the sculpture is ready to be sent to me.

**Plus my state sales tax and a total of $3. for shipping and handling*

Signature _____
ALL ORDERS ARE SUBJECT TO ACCEPTANCE.

Mr.
Mrs.
Miss _____
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Address _____

City, _____

State, Zip _____

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July/August 1986 Vol. XXIII, No. 4

# American West

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PAGE 20 COURTESY HORACE M. ALBRIGHT

PAGE 34 PHOTO BY RONALD D. DEHN


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*Cover*

The beautiful and intricately detailed object on our cover is part of a new and fabulous work of art. In the realm of elegantly crafted and decorated arms, skilled Americans have contributed many works of art since the first half of the nineteenth century. Now in 1986 an American group, the David Miller Company of Tucson, Arizona, has produced an embellished sporting rifle that "has set a new standard in the 600-year-old field of gunmaking," worldwide. The pear-shaped beauty on the cover is the rust-blue and French-grey bolt knob on the Miller rifle. Incised in a unique design and inlaid with 24-carat gold, the knob reflects the tone of the entire work—the fulfillment of function and aesthetics.

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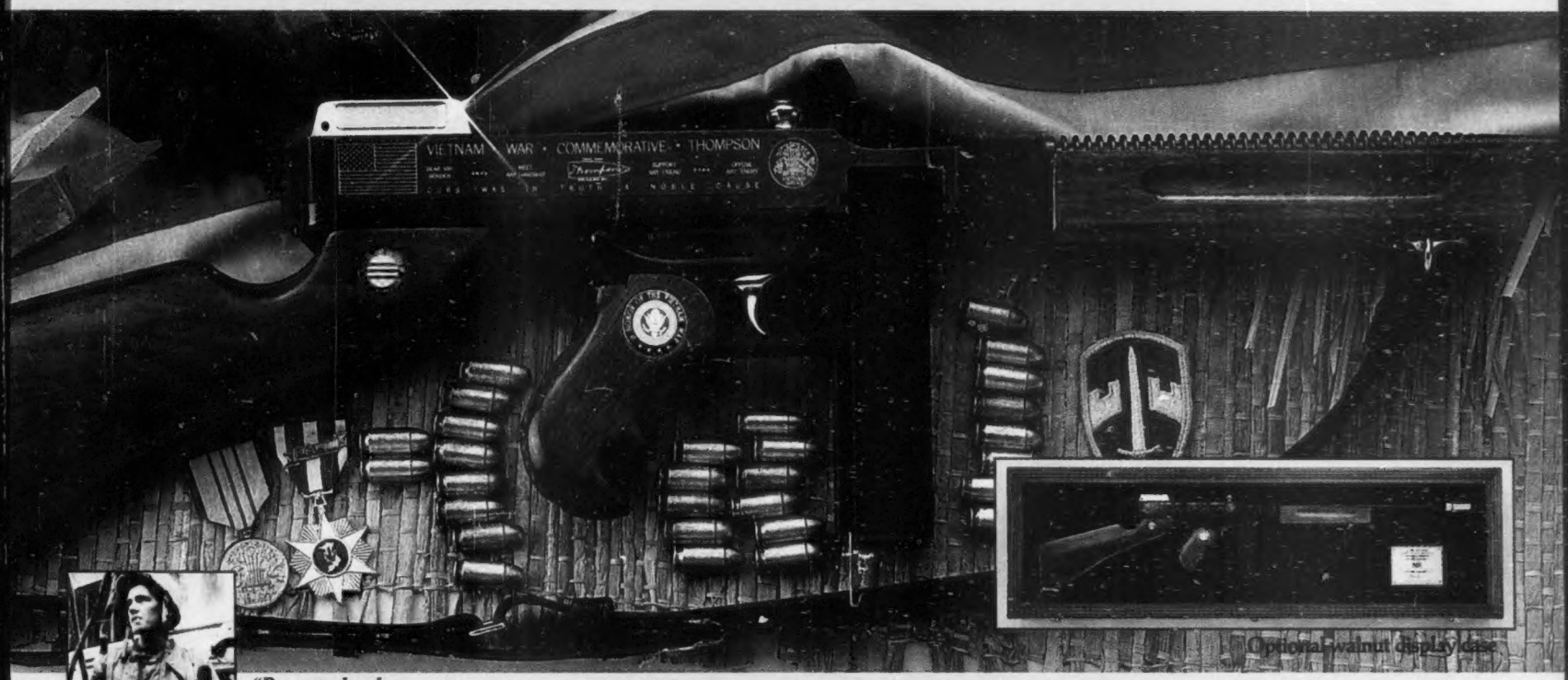
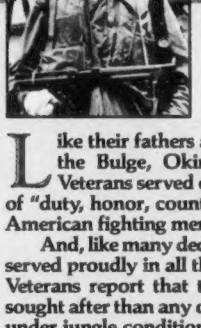
*Proudly Presenting...*

# THE VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATIVE THOMPSON

***The first, firing, collector longarm ever issued to honor the Americans who fought for freedom in Vietnam.***




Optional walnut display case



*"Bear any burden,*
*Meet any hardship,*
*Support any friend,*
*Oppose any enemy..."*
JFK, 1961

Like their fathers and older brothers who served at the Bulge, Okinawa and Pusan, our Vietnam Veterans served our nation for the same principles of "duty, honor, country" that have always guided our American fighting men in combat.

And, like many dedicated Americans, the Thompson served proudly in all three wars. In fact, many Vietnam Veterans report that the Thompson was more highly sought after than any other weapon, due to its reliability under jungle conditions and the stopping power of the .45 ammo it fired—two characteristics found lacking in certain other military-issued weapons.

Now,The American Historical Foundation is proud to honor our Vietnam Veterans through the issuance of the Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson.

## Limited Edition Of Only 1500

Only 1500 will be made in this strictly limited edition commissioned by The American Historical Foundation and built to the Foundation's specifications by the official maker of the famous Thompson, Auto-Ordnance Corporation. Each is specially serially numbered between 0001 and 1500, with the prefix V (for Vietnam). This serial number is also inscribed on the accompanying Certificate of Authenticity, which attests to the 24-karat gold plating and the edition limit.

The Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson is being produced in a semiautomatic firing version, so no special license is required to own one. Upon special request, full automatics will also be produced and numbered within this edition limit for holders of Class III Federal Firearms licenses (please add $350; non-refundable). Both versions have already been classified as Curios and Relics by BATF, an acknowledgment of their collectible status. Firing instructions are included.

## Special Commemorative Features

This Thompson is a real man's weapon, constructed of 12 pounds of steel and walnut, but hand-built with special commemorative features.

You sight across the 24-karat gold plated rear sight base and through the special, gold plated activator knob with a single rib, symbolic of the DMZ that divided the two Vietnams. The highly polished, gun-blued barrel is cut with 35 deep cooling fins and mounted with a mirror-polished, 24-karat gold plated Cutts Compensator and front sight.

Your finger curls around the 24-karat gold plated trigger, as your left hand and right arm grasp the American walnut stocks—original G.I. production—hand finished with seven coats of hand-rubbed lacquer and polished to a gleaming presentation grade.

The stocks show off the 24-karat gold plated sling swivels, swivel mounts and screws which affix the black leather military sling.

You cradle the precision-milled receiver, which is highly polished to highlight the roll-engraved and gold-gilt infilled commemorative inscriptions. The presentation side bears our Flag, the Vietnam Service Medal, the famous Thompson "bullet" trademark and quotations from both Presidents Kennedy and Reagan. The reverse bears the special serial number, the issuing organization and the Thompson patents.

The shoulder stock is fitted with two, full-color, fired-enamel cloisonne medallions, bearing a gold plated inscription in black—symbolic of the Vietnam War Memorial—surrounding a circularized yellow and red flag of the Republic of Vietnam. The pistol grip is fitted with a matching medallion embossed with the Great Seal of the United States and commemorative tributes.

## This Is A Firing Thompson!

This no-nonsense Commemorative is a fully functional, firing Thompson, chambered for the same famous, readily available, .45 ACP ammunition that G.I.s and American shooters have used since 1911. Because it fires in the semiautomatic mode, you do not need a special submachine gun license to own it. Anyone who can own a standard hunting rifle can own this Thompson Commemorative. And because it is a firing Thompson, it could be called upon to defend your home and family in the same manner in which it has defended American lives and freedoms for over 65 years. If you do not have a firearms license, we will coordinate delivery with you through your local firearms dealer after your reservation is received at Foundation Headquarters. If you do have a federal license, send a signed copy, and your Thompson will be delivered directly to you.

## Highly Collectible

Because of the extremely small edition limits and their availability as semiautomatics, Thompson commemoratives have become some of the most highly collectible firearms in recent history. Previous Thompson commemoratives have been quickly fully subscribed and now bring significantly higher prices on the collector market.

A furniture-finished walnut display case, green velvet lined and fitted with an acrylic glass lid and three solid brass locks, is also available to show and protect your investment.

## How to Reserve: Satisfaction Guaranteed

Available exclusively from The American Historical Foundation, you may use the reservation form below or call toll free. Your satisfaction is guaranteed, or return for a full refund within one month.

With your reservation, you will be made a Member of the Foundation and receive expert information concerning the history, care and display of military arms and edged weapons.

Prompt response is required if you are to be one of only 1500 men, museums and organizations worldwide who have the opportunity to own one of these extremely rare, firing showpieces. If the edition is sold out before your reservation is received, your deposit will be refunded and your name placed on a standby list. This special commemorative Thompson is assured a place of honor in any collection, and it provides a lasting, tangible link between those Americans who fought for freedom in Vietnam and their forebears of World War II and Korea.

**RESERVATION**

Satisfaction Guaranteed or Return in 30 Days for Full Refund

To: The American Historical Foundation
1142 West Grace Street, Dept. B84
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24-hour toll free reservations: (800) 368-8080

Yes, I wish to reserve the Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson, selectively plated with 24-karat gold, with roll-engraved inscriptions and deluxe presentation-grade finish. Only 1500 will be made. I will also receive a Certificate of Authenticity, membership in the Foundation and information concerning the history, care, display and firing of the Thompson.

☐ My deposit of $95 (or credit card authorization) is enclosed. Please invoice (or charge my credit card) for the balance due:
- ☐ in four equal payments of $300.
- ☐ in six equal payments of $200.
- ☐ in full.

☐ My payment in full (or credit card authorization) for $1295 is enclosed.

☐ Also please send the optional furniture-finished walnut display case. Please add $225 to the final charge of the payment I have selected above.

Name. . . . . .

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For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, send account number, expiration date and signature. Virginia residents please add tax.

# View from the West

PHOTO BY RONALD D. DEHN

In the course of putting AMERICAN WEST together this month the publisher, editors, and art director at one time or another trooped over to Dave Miller's gunsmith shop to see the rifle that appears on the cover and as the centerpiece of Larry Wilson's article "The Art of American Arms."

Those who know far more about firearms than we do tell us that this is the finest gun ever made. It's challenging—if not downright impossible—to photograph, much less describe the best of something ever done. In preparing this article we studied dozens of existing photographs of Miller's work, finally rejecting them, and commissioned two photographers of our own to take the photographs of the Miller gun that appear in this issue.

We wanted to spare no effort to bring our readers—gun enthusiasts or not—as close as we could to what Dave Miller and his colleagues Curt Crum, Dale Drew, and engraver Lynton McKenzie have created here: a gun, a work of art, a virtuoso performance that one ordinarily wouldn't associate with firearms. We think we've come about as close as possible, in the two-dimensional format the magazine allows, to share the experience we had when we first encountered Miller's gun. But still there's something missing, and that something is the sense of centered single-mindedness one feels in the presence of Miller and his associates: men who studied their dream and dared to materialize it. It's dangerous ground to be on whether one is a writer, a musician, a sculptor, or a gunsmith. The creative world is littered with the hulks of human beings who aimed at seeing their dreams fully realized in art and failed.

Miller looks right at you, like a man sighting down a gun barrel, when he says: "'Innovation' and 'creativity' are words that come easy, but it's oh so hard to do the thing. Critics told us it's all been done in our field. There's nothing left. But we began, and I could see the end. I could see the finished rifle perfectly before me. New ideas came, and we sustained them, worked them. New doors opened. We couldn't see the openings ahead. We just kept working in the direction of our vision. Building. The frontiers were in our minds all the time." Then looking away for a minute, Miller muses, "I'm not saying that to fail would be life-threatening . . . just devastating."

Miller turned forty-three this year, probably the youngest gunsmith ever to receive the recognition he has. But then he began seeing his dream guns when he was thirteen, a farm boy opening the first door in his imagination on a hard-scrabble piece of land near Kokomo, Indiana. "Maybe the time period is wrong for what we're doing," he says. "Firearms are controversial. Maybe the medium is wrong. This isn't sculpture or painting. But this is my vision. This is what I *have* to do. I'd rather not be here than not do this. It may never be accepted as art that hangs on a wall, but I can live with that, knowing that this is the best there is, that we've spared nothing."

Working alone in a little shop in Tucson, Arizona, driven by his vision, Miller and his colleagues have discovered for themselves a truth that many men might know, but few have the hunter's nerve to track down and capture in their own dreams. Goethe put it this way: "Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. . . . Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."

Tom Pew

# The Statue of Liberty
# *Centennial Fine Art Plate*

**Actual size of plate: 8" diameter.**

Unlike most collector plates which are mass-produced in ceramic with decal designs, this issue was actually minted like a fine proof coin. Made of heavy spun copper and then selectively electroplated with silver and precious gold, this plate is as unique a treasure as Lady Liberty herself. Only 5,000 plates will be produced. Once that number is reached, the dies will be destroyed and the edition closed forever. Serious plate collectors are advised to order early. ($149.50 plus $2.50 P&H each-P33)

**Honoring Our Beloved Symbol of Freedom**

She has guarded our shores for a century ... a towering symbol of our nation's freedom and opportunity. The Statue of Liberty. The light of her torch has pointed and continues to point the way to a new and better life for millions of the world's people searching for truth and justice. She is the very embodiment of America and the ideals we hold so dear.

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Now, to mark the 100th birthday of America's most notable landmark, this stunning fine art plate is available in strictly limited edition exclusively from The Historic Providence Mint. Americans everywhere are eagerly joining the celebration of America and this most important anniversary of our proud symbol of freedom. But only a very few will ever have the opportunity of a lifetime that now awaits you by owning this unique collectors' anniversary plate.

**Strictly Limited Edition -- Registered Serial Number**

To assure the status of your plate, it will be assigned a unique serial number and will be officially registered in your name by The Historic Providence Mint. Once assigned, a certificate of authenticity will be issued and your serial number will be permanently engraved into the back of your plate, forever attesting to its importance. Naturally, serial numbers will be assigned as orders are received, so don't delay; order your Centennial Fine Art Plate TODAY!

Our artists and craftsmen have been creating high quality products for over 75 years. If for any reason you are not completely satisfied, simply return your plate within 15 days for a replacement, refund or charge card credit.

SPECIAL RESERVATION FORM **896B**

## The Statue of Liberty Centennial Plate

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222 Harrison Street • P.O. Box 8 •Providence, RI 02901-0008

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FIRE FOUNTAIN, PU-U O-O, EAST RIFT OF KILAUEA

COURTESY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

# The Fiery Realm of Madame Pele

## by Stephen L. Harris

Not everywhere can one visit the home of a living goddess. On the Big Island of Hawaii, however, the curious can peer directly into the principal residence of Madame Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of volcanic fire.

According to ancient myth—and in many cases present belief—Pele lives in the Halemaumau "fire pit," an almost vertically walled circular crater on the floor of the summit caldera of the Kilauea volcano, one of the most frequently active fire mountains in the world. A major feature of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, the Kilauea caldera, an oval-shaped collapse depression measuring two by two-and-one-half miles in diameter, is remarkably accessible even to casual tourists. An eleven-mile-long paved road loops around the caldera rim, dipping down to the caldera floor on the southwest side, where a short trail leads to the very edge of Pele's sulphurous abode.

The goddess, notorious for her blistering temper and unpredictable behavior, was not officially at home when I dropped by to pay my respects in July 1985. She had temporarily abandoned Halemaumau to tend new fires along the east rift zone—a linear series of faults and fissures extending northeastward from Kilauea's summit along the outer flanks of the volcano. Since January 1983, Madame Pele has produced floods of molten rock from different vents along the east rift zone. Lately, she has concentrated on building a new cinder cone—Pu-u O-o (Hill of the O-o bird)—which by mid-1985 had already attained a height of 730 feet. Although the new volcano is not easily visited, hikers can obtain an unobstructed view by following a mile-long trail to the top of Pu-u Huluhulu, an older cinder cone located near the Chain of Craters road. Pu-u O-o spews lava only intermittently but sends forth towering columns of steam almost constantly.

When Pele is restless, many practitioners of the old faith try to appease her wrath by offering gifts. Before the island population was Christianized, pigs were slaughtered as sacrifices, but today the devotee usually brings flowers, the Ohelo berries (sacred to the goddess), or even a bottle of gin—the lady is said to be particularly fond of this beverage. On a recent visit I found the Halemaumau crater rim littered with incense sticks, bouquets, including a pot of chrysanthemums, and a flask of the preferred liquor. These friendly attempts to calm Pele are not amiss, for many times during this century she has directed enormous torrents of lava over previously fertile land, reducing lush forests, fields of sugar cane, and entire villages to deserts of barren rock.

Pele is personally responsible for the remarkable fact that our fiftieth state is, literally, the fastest-growing area in the West. Between 1969 and 1974, effusions of fluid lava constructed Mauna Ulu (Growing Mountain) on Kilauea's east slope, from which

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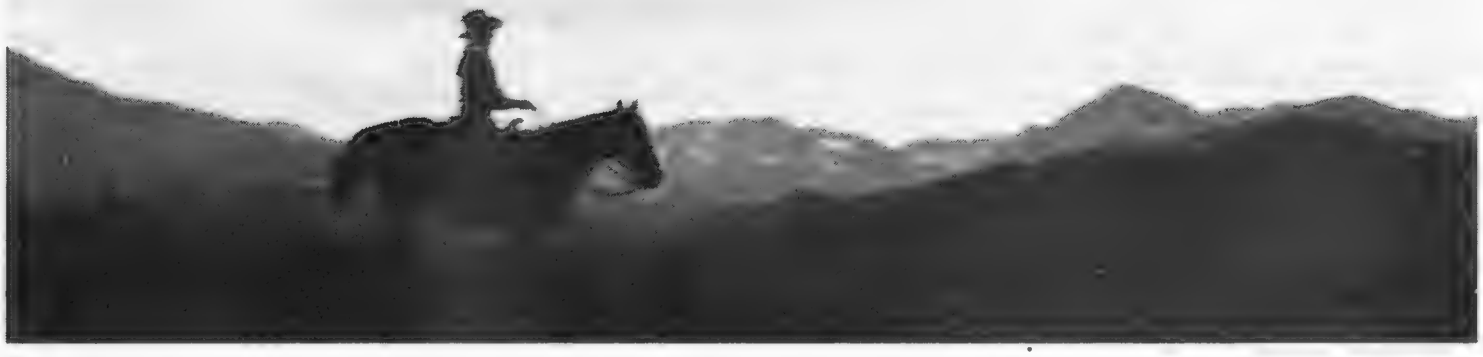

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Examine "Flint" for 15 days without risk. Then decide if you wish to keep it… and go on receiving Louis L'Amour's frontier classics at only $9.95 each, plus postage and handling. About half the price of most hardcover books!

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basaltic flows traveled eight miles to the seacoast, creating 200 acres of new land. The entire Hawaiian archipelago, from Midway to the Big Island itself, is a succession of geological monuments to Pele's creative energy. Each island is the top of a largely submarine mountain range built of tens of thousands of individual lava flows erupted over millions of years.

Hawaii, from which the whole island group takes its name, is the largest and youngest of Pele's building projects, consisting of five overlapping shield volcanoes. A volcanic shield, so called because of its supposed resemblance to a warrior's shield laid flat with the curved side up, is a broad, very gently sloping structure composed of thin, sheet-like flows of basalt lava.

The Hawaiian shield volcanoes are the largest and highest mountains on Earth. The loftiest is Mauna Kea (White Mountain), which wears a snowcap from fall until late spring. Mauna Kea's visible cone stands 13,796 feet above sea level, but measured from the ocean floor it rises approximately 31,000 feet from base to summit. Only about 100 feet lower in elevation, its neighbor Mauna Loa is even larger in volume (an estimated 10,000 cubic miles) and still growing. The 1950 eruption produced an enormous outpouring of molten basalt that significantly extended the Big Island's shoreline. In 1984 Mauna Loa and Kilauea erupted simultaneously, adding still more real estate to Pele's domain and demonstrating that the goddess can operate in two places at once.

According to legend, Pele's second home is located atop Mauna Loa, in a three-mile-long caldera named Mokuaweoweo. Mauna Loa's eruptions typically begin in the summit caldera and then break out on the outer slopes of the giant shield. Before the lava begins to flow, however, Pele customarily warns her people of impending danger by appearing to a few witnesses as either a beautiful young woman or an old lady in distress. The destructiveness of the forthcoming eruption is said to be determined inversely by the degree of hospitality shown to Pele during these mysterious visitations.

Following her warning appearances, Pele opens the show in Mokuaweoweo with spectacular "fire fountains," towering jets of liquid rock powered by gas escaping from the molten material. These sprays of lava can reach awesome heights—one at Kilauea recently shot 1,900 feet skyward, the highest ever measured.

Molten rock pouring from the fountains commonly forms a lava lake in Mokuaweoweo, which eventually drains back into underground reservoirs when this opening phase of the activity is over. During the second part of the eruptive cycle, Pele moves from the summit to the volcano's lower slopes. There she opens long fissures on Mauna Loa's flanks; from these linear fractures a chain of lava jets emerges, forming a "curtain of fire," sometimes several miles in length. Later in the cycle, Pele focuses her attention on a few vents that feed rivers of molten rock that travel many miles downslope, enveloping plantations and villages in their path.

In 1984 rivers of fluid basalt threatened to engulf Hilo, the largest city on the island. As in past eruptions, the goddess relented, and the lava stopped before reaching the island's busiest port.

It is probably only a matter of time before Hilo, as well as many other settlements and luxury resorts on the Big Island become victims of Pele's wrath. Even a cursory survey of Hawaii's topography reveals that few areas have escaped Pele's ministrations. Much of the island consists of vast tracts of barren basalt, emplaced so recently that they support little vegetation.

The geologic record offers no assurance that Madame Pele will not temporarily vacate her favored homes in the Halemaumau and Mokuaweoweo fire pits and reactivate old haunts or even establish new hearths at unexpected places. One largely ignored site of Pele's former habitation is the Hualailai volcano that looms above the now densely populated Kona coast. In 1800–1801 the goddess briefly revisited Hualailai to produce voluminous streams of lava that extended all the way to the sea. The Kona airport now sits atop one of these congealed flows. Hualailai's nearly two centuries of quiet are no guarantee that Pele will not return. When Pele again leaves Halemaumau to ignite Hualailai's fires, the Kona tourist industry, concentrated along the volcano's western foot, may be forced to relocate. Whenever she sets up housekeeping next, the goddess is certain to redesign the surrounding landscape in her favorite shade of basaltic black.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

For further information, consult: R. and B. Decker, *Volcano Watching* (1984); G. A. Macdonald and A. T. Abbott, *Volcanoes in the Sea: The Geology of Hawaii* (1970); J. Mullins, *The Goddess Pele* (1977).

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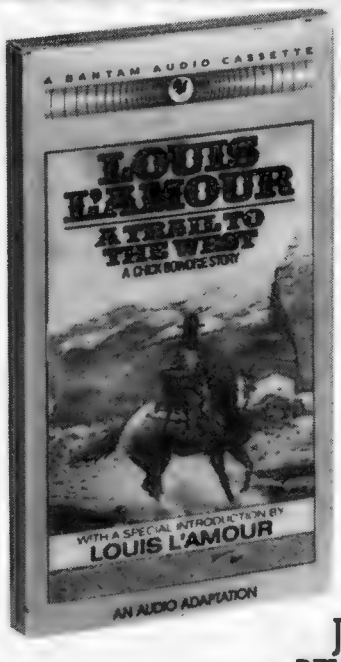


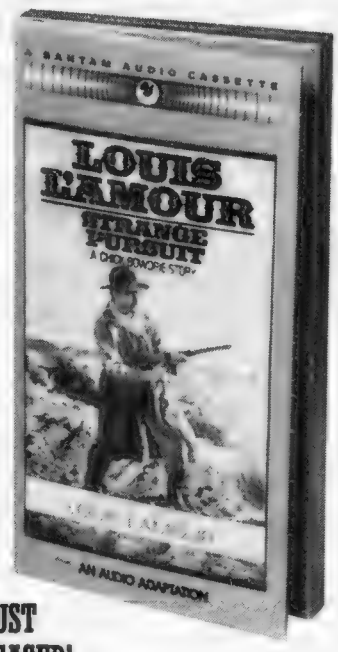


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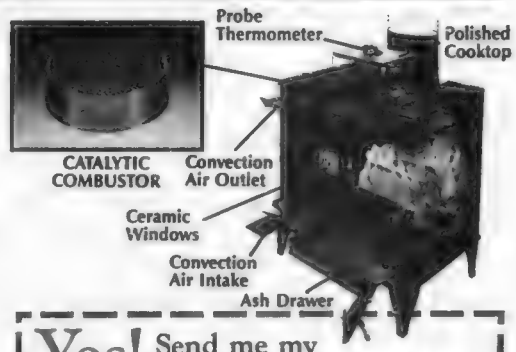


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# Letters to the Editor

**Who's watching?**

If only the deer and elk were abroad when Erwin and Peggy Bauer took the picture of Oxbow Pond, Grand Teton National Park (page 10, AMERICAN WEST, May/June 1986), who was watching through the clouds?

Two eyes show in the clouds: one over the center peak and one lower and to the right. Beware the haunting eyes.

Leroy A. Patterson
Falls Village, Connecticut

**The *Stagecoach* runs**

Appropriately, all of the individuals pictured on the cover of your May/June issue, which is another good one, are Texans: Johnny, Willie, Waylon, and Kris.

John Spragins
Texas Tourist Development Agency
Austin, Texas

Herewith a quibble or two over some remarks in your May/June issue. On page 40, the writer says that Ford shot the first *Stagecoach* in Monument Valley, Utah. I always have been under the impression that the film was shot on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona, said reservation including Monument Valley's section in that state.

Same page, the writer says that Ford's film was the "first 'A' Western." Well, this depends upon what she means by a "Western."

Also, John Wayne was plucked from "grip" and "gopher" obscurity by Raoul Walsh to make a film called *The Big Trail* that was such a turkey that it made Wayne toil in "oaters" until Ford put him in *Stagecoach*.

Incidentally, one of Ford and Wayne's last films was about my stepfather, Commodore Frank Wead, played by Wayne in *Wings of Eagles*.

W. H. Hutchinson
Chico, California

*Bodie Thoene, author of our* Stagecoach *piece, has asked us to say that according to her knowledge, John Ford shot the 1939 film in southern Utah, near the border with Arizona. She points out that the motion picture industry gave the designation "A" to Ford's* Stagecoach, *the first Western to receive that classification–Ed.*

**Sitting Bull's murder**

[Regarding "Andy Warhol Meets Sitting Bull," AMERICAN WEST, January/February 1986, by] my friend Alvin Josephy, Sitting Bull was not stabbed but instead shot by the Indian police.

John M. Carroll
Bryan, Texas

**Mystery man speaks up**

Enclosed is my check for a copy of the March/April 1986 edition of AMERICAN WEST. My picture is on the cover, #148 [unidentified rider].

Blake Wilson
Folsom, California

**Chuffing with Mosquito Fleet**

Thank you for your article on the Mosquito Fleet on the Puget Sound (May/June 1986). Having been raised right on the Sound, I found it delightful.

Jeanne Farrington
Monterey, California

Enjoyed reading May/June 1986 issue in its entirety, especially the story about the small steamboats. As a small child, I had to cross the San Francisco Bay on a paddlewheeler


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that carried autos. "The Mosquito Fleet" article brought back pleasant memories. On a vacation to Puget Sound in 1983, we were also taken to our vacation spot aboard a ferry carrying walkers, bikers, autos, and cargo. It sure was a fun trip.

Lillian Dudicz
Hayward, California

**Smile, pardner**

Thank you for your comments in the May/June issue ("View from the West") regarding the cowboy image of America. Having a degree in American studies, I certainly do appreciate Khadafy's "slur" on the American character. Give me six-shooters over crown jewels anytime.

Margaret Parratt
Placentia, California

**Those Okie kids again**

The article about the Okie kids really struck home with me. I was born and raised in the Sacramento Valley and saw so many of these poor people coming and going, camped along the roads and in the orchards. I feel bad now, how they were treated by most of the Californians. Okies were looked down on. We were all guilty of this, I imagine, to some extent. It's nice to know now that there were compassionate people like Leo Hart who cared. I guess most people just didn't know how to react to that invasion.

Bernice Hellier
Ogden, Utah

Anyone interested in the true education of youngsters should read and think about the article "Children of the Grapes of Wrath" by Jerry Stanley. What a classic lesson this great story offers. By means of voluntarism these children found education without political funding (money taken through the threat of force and violence). With any program that is tax supported, there is an abundance of waste. In the tax-supported school systems, the most unkind waste of all is in the product, their schooled and indoctrinated victims.

This "Okie" school did have a crime prevention program. It was hard work and the lack of theft funding.

Dan Henry
Big Pine Key, Florida

The story of Leo Hart is truly a story worth telling ["Children of the Grapes of Wrath" by Jerry Stanley, March/April 1986]. I found it an inspiring example of the difference a few dedicated people can make in this world.

I went out and found another copy of the magazine to mail to my mother, a former teacher. Keep up the good work. A+ to author Jerry Stanley.

Susan Hope Everett
Irving, Texas

I was quite impressed with "The Children of the Grapes of Wrath" (March/April). However, the story should have started five years earlier. You see I was one of the Okies. The hard years were from 1935 to 1940. I certainly give Leo Hart credit for all his work.

We arrived in Calipatria, California, in January 1936. There were probably ten or fifteen thousand of us camped out on the desert east of Calipatria. I take issue with the statement that we were unclean and suffering from being undernourished. We never had fast money for fast foods, but if one family ate, the others did also. Many times I have seen people going from tent to tent gathering something for someone who was down on their luck.

We picked cotton from Oklahoma to Arizona. Then to California to pick peas at Calipatria, Tracy, and Clarksburg. From there to Nampa and Victor, Idaho. Back to the San Joaquin valley for cotton. In January we would start all over again.

God bless those people of Weedpatch. If there had been more people like Leo.

J. D. Hollis
Nampa, Idaho


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**Grant-Kohrs Ranch**

Many thanks for Patricia Nell Warren's excellent article "A Ranch Is the Earth." Such authentic family-based articles I am sure give us a really true picture of early day ranching.

One thing that particularly captured my interest was her reference (page 30) to the great stock losses ranchers suffered in the hard Montana winter of 1886–87, pointing out that few of the animals were acclimated to the hard winter conditions. My uncle, Harry Gordon, was an early homesteader at Henry's Lake, Idaho. His correspondence of February 1890 refers to the severe winter they were enduring, saying that the ground in the foothills was strewn with the bodies of dead horses and cattle, with the dreaded month of March still to come.

This devastation inspired Harry to try to domesticate native animals for stock. He started experimenting with mountain sheep and elk. Of the several mountain sheep he penned, all died, injuring themselves in desperate efforts to break free. Definitely not for domestication. The elk, however, were another matter. To quote: "I caught a large cow elk yesterday right near home. They are easy to domesticate. I have this one halter-broke already and can feed her from my hands. She seems to be gentle and perfectly tame. A person could hardly believe that she had only been in captivity so short a time." Harry had to abandon this project, however, for the penning of these magnificent animals made them easy prey for wolves.

Another good ecologically sound idea that couldn't bear domestication!

Josephine Veenker
June Lake, California

Your story and photographs in the May/June issue of the Grant-Kohrs Ranch and the selling of the Warren bred heifer in the auction ring at Butte, Montana, bring back memories of being at the opening sale the day Rile Havens took it over. It was the fall of 1939 or 1940. I was in that north country buying cattle for a Los Angeles packer. Floyd Skelton, owner of the Idaho Falls Auction and many of Rile's friends were there for support. There was a big run and a long day, and we finally finished about seven o'clock. No provision had been made for snacks, lunch, or food of any kind. Finally back to the Findlay Hotel for a few phone calls. Everyone was starved.

I was sitting in the lobby with the freight agent for the Union Pacific waiting to go to dinner. Floyd had promised to take us all out to Freddie's at Meadorville for, as he described it, "the biggest and best steak in the West." I turned to the agent and declared I could eat two of them. He agreed on a bet to pay for the second one, if I could do it. I got through the first one and about half of the second and had to quit. If you had ever been to Freddie's in those days, "that was a meal"—New York steaks (aged) you could cut with a fork, out of 1400 lb. steers, the size of a small roast. All the trimmings, large thick fried potatos, chunks of pickled beets, and other vegetables plus dessert—all for $2.00. In the back room were the games. So if you made it there, you probably paid a good price for that dinner.

Bill Munch
Gold River, California

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AW

# Western Lookout

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## New Yorkers Swing Along with Cowboy Joe

Shake the trail dust from your boots, pardners, and settle back for an afternoon of good ole Western swing music. Change "trail dust" to "city soot" and "boots" to "shoes" and you've got the proper greeting for listeners of "Cowboy Joe's Radio Ranch." Unlike typical fans of Western swing, members of Cowboy Joe's audience tread the concrete byways of New York rather than the sage-lined dirt roads of Wyoming or Arizona.

Every Sunday from noon to 2:00 P.M., Paul Aaron, a born-and-bred easterner, dons the hat of Cowboy Joe and broadcasts interviews with rodeo cowboys, tidbits of Western lore, and Western swing music from Columbia University's community radio station WKCR-FM. Until recently, "Cowboy Joe's Radio Ranch" has been syndicated by National Public Radio, reaching faraway sites like Houston, Texas, and Laramie, Wyoming. The show has been entertaining New Yorkers since 1977.

Aaron became a Western swing fanatic during a short stint as a student at Colorado State University. Attending a basketball game against the University of Wyoming, he fell in love with that school's fight song, "Ragtime Cowboy Joe." Since then, he's collected more than eighty versions of the tune, playing two per show.

Someday, Aaron hopes his program will become a household word like Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion." He says he "doesn't have the mentality to be on top-forty radio," but he would consider moving out West if he could retain the format of his show. Until then, he'll keep spinning Western swing music, an island of Western culture in the East.

**The Pony Express Museum**'s entire collection of Western memorabilia—including old-time fire engines, a Wells Fargo stagecoach and treasure boxes, and nine cigar-store Indians—was sold to San Francisco, California, gun collector Greg Martin late last February. Martin purchased the contents of the Reno, Nevada, museum in order to obtain three guns: an 1866 Winchester rifle owned by nineteenth century stagecoach king Ben Holladay, engraved with Holladay's name; a pistol that reputedly belonged to Billy the Kid; and a shotgun owned by California stagecoach robber Black Bart.

Martin does not plan to display publicly the several thousand items of memorabilia, which were originally collected by Californian W. Parker Lyon in the early 1900s. Lyon opened the Pony Express Museum in Arcadia, California, east of Los Angeles. The late William Harrah purchased the museum in

*Continued on page 28*

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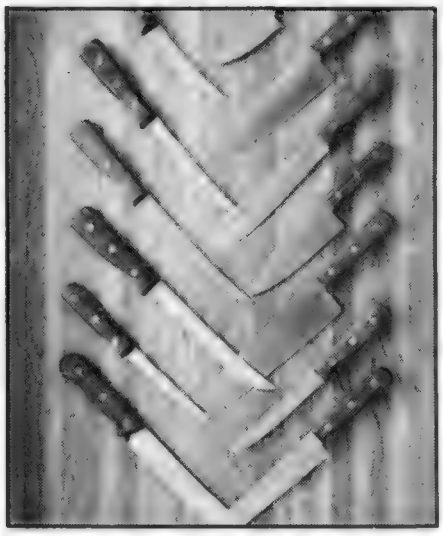

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# THE COOLIDGES IN WONDERLAND

## First family frolicked, fished, and marveled in Yellowstone

**by Horace M. Albright**
**with Marian Albright Schenck**

*Horace M. Albright is one of the grand old men of the National Park Service. He served as the Assistant Director of the newly created Service from 1917 to 1919, when he was appointed the Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. After fulfilling that responsibility until 1929, Albright became the Director of the National Park Service, succeeding Stephen T. Mather, the first Director. Albright resigned his post in 1933 to enter private business, but throughout the following years, he has been closely tied to conservation efforts, his important contributions recognized by dozens of honors, awards, and honorary degrees.*

*Having reached the esteemed age of ninety-six years, Mr. Albright is retired and lives with his daughter, Marian Albright Schenck, and her husband in southern California. He continues to write, to receive honors, and to give advice to conservationists who seek him out. The following account recalls the visit of President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge to Yellowstone in 1927 when Albright was Superintendent there. His observations afford interesting insights into the personalities of his visitors.*

**(Left)** ***President and Mrs. Coolidge visit Fishing Cone, West Thumb, at Lake Yellowstone with Major James Coupal.***
**(Right)** ***The Presidential limousine was stopped so that the President and First Lady could watch Superintendent Albright feed a Yellowstone bear. At right are Secret Service agents.***

ON AUGUST 22, 1927, THE SPECIAL NORTHERN PACIFIC train bearing President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, their son John, and party of aides, Secret Service men, and reporters pulled into Gardiner, Montana, the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park. The President and his family were coming to spend a short vacation to enjoy the wonders of the country's first national park. As the train arrived at the terminal, black clouds released their burden, and in moments a deluge struck. All of our painstaking plans for the Park reception appeared doomed.

However, the Coolidges stepped down from the train onto a covered platform, seeming oblivious to the storm. They graciously acknowledged the mounted ranger escort in bedraggled and soaked uniforms carrying dripping American and Presidential flags as their motorcade moved swiftly through the great stone arch, dedicated by Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, and drove several miles to the hotel at Mammoth Hot Springs. Here, the Coolidges, with a few pieces of luggage, were escorted to a suite where they enjoyed lunch. However, this was all a ruse to make everyone think that was where they would be staying. Actually the Secret Service had chosen a private home, Harry Child's, rather than the large hotel for the Coolidge family to spend their first night in Yellowstone. Midnight of August 22, Eastern time, was the hour set for the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, convicted murderers, whose case had become a *cause célèbre* throughout the nation. Coolidge had refused to intervene in the matter, saying that it was an issue for the state of Massachusetts. Nevertheless, because of the notoriety and because the con-

ALL PHOTOS FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

victed men were outspoken anarchists, Coolidge and his family were felt to be somewhat in danger. Secret Service men were stationed inside the house, more Secret Service as well as National Park Service rangers ringed the house, and additional rangers patrolled 300 yards beyond.

After lunch the Presidential party left the hotel and drove to the Child home. When they alighted from the cars and walked into the house, a "band" of three boys and a five-year-old girl (two of whom belonged to me) piped them aboard. Everyone smiled and waved to them except the President who never cast a glance their way. A short time later the Coolidges reappeared, climbed back in the waiting cars, and set off for Tower Falls and Camp Roosevelt about twenty miles to the east, with the usual Secret Service. But now other Park Service personnel besides me joined them and would remain near the President for most of his stay in Yellowstone. I assigned Chief Ranger Sam Woodring, as well as various naturalists, to be unobtrusive but always ready to answer questions, point out interesting animals, and explain natural features.

When the Presidential party reached Camp Roosevelt, everyone set out on foot to see the lovely rustic lodge near the site where President Theodore Roosevelt had camped with the noted naturalist John Burroughs and some other friends in 1903. Glancing at a large sign explaining this, the President turned to me and remarked in an offhand manner, "I got his camp in Washington."

A few minutes later, everyone had to stop while rangers removed a huge lodgepole pine tree that had recently fallen across the trail. Then a large mother bear and her three cubs lumbered up. Park people knew the mother. She had appeared several years before with an almost identical bear; so they had been named "Tom" and "Jerry" and had become great favorites at Camp Roosevelt. Earlier in 1927 "Jerry" had shown up with her cubs and was renamed "Geraldine." Whatever the animal's name, the President did not appear to think much of bears and was ready to head back to the car immediately. Since it was getting late in the afternoon, a quick trip to Tower Falls was all the Secret Service would allow.

We returned to Mammoth and the Child home as unobtrusively as possible, all cars but the President's dropping off and going to the hotel. The Coolidges said they weren't tired and wanted to tour the great steaming terraces nearby. Taking two Secret Service men along (as it was nearing the hour for the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti—ten o'clock, Mountain time), I led the Coolidge family over the Nature Trail. They found it fascinating, the President in particular asking many questions and peering down closely at the unusual formations. It was a mile and a half walk at nearly 7,000 feet, but only

darkness forced us to go back to the Child residence where the Coolidges remained for a quiet evening and early bedtime. The Park Service people took most of the Presidential party and newsmen to a minstrel show put on by the young college men and women who were hired as much for their talent as for their ability to perform as "pearl divers" (wash dishes), "gear jammers" (drive buses) or "sheet slingers" (clean rooms). I did not retire until official word was received that Sacco and Vanzetti had been electrocuted in Massachusetts a few minutes after midnight there. The President was not told of this, and a heavy guard was maintained around his residence. The first day of the Yellowstone visit had gone well.

AUGUST 23: ANOTHER BRIGHT AND SUNNY DAY GREETED us this morning, incredible after all the rain we'd been having that summer. The Presidential party was up early and ready to go to their assigned cars when we arrived at the Child home. I introduced one of the first woman rangers to Mrs. Coolidge. Marguerite Lindsley, dressed in her green National Park Service uniform, was warmly congratulated by the First Lady on being a pioneer in such an overwhelmingly masculine profession. Miss Lindsley reminded Mrs. Coolidge that they were both members of Pi Beta Phi Sorority and said, "Pi Phis are rather extraordinary women, don't you agree, Mrs. Coolidge?"

Everyone climbed into the cars and, after a brief stop at Mammoth Terraces, drove on through the Hoodoos (weird formations left by movement of the hot waters to another part of the mountainside), past the unusual volcanic glass Obsidian Cliff, and on to Norris Geyser Basin, twenty miles away. I rode on a jump seat behind the President who sat in the front seat because he often got carsick. John and Mrs. Coolidge were in the backseat. I pointed out interesting features, related historical anecdotes and pinpointed many wild animals we passed, including three unusually fine specimens of moose. The President rarely reacted to any of this and didn't say ten words all the way. I got used to this and found "Silent Cal" to be a good name for him.

Reaching the geyser area, the whole party left the cars to observe the broad expanse of hot springs, pools, and steaming fissures as well as to be observed by groups of tourists, some of whom trailed the President and his family, snapping photos. My wife overheard one child remark wisely, "Gee, he looks just like his pictures."

About 11:30 A.M. the President's entourage reached Old Faithful Inn where everyone scurried to rooms facing Old Faithful geyser to watch its next eruption. Shortly afterwards President Coolidge set out to go fishing in the Firehole River, accompanied by Colonel Edmund Starli. (Chief of the Secret Service), several other Secret Service agents, and Chief Ranger Woodring. Apparently the lures the group used (worms) did not interest the local Loch Leven trout, and the President would have returned empty handed had not Sam Eagle from West Yellowstone, fishing nearby, presented him with eleven of these elusive trout. Meanwhile my wife and I took Mrs. Coolidge, John, Everett Sanders (the President's private secretary), and Mrs. Sanders on a trip across the Upper Geyser Basin, stopping often to walk to see various famous geysers erupt.

The President was fascinated by Old Faithful and watched every eruption from five-thirty until bedtime, even asking me to slip outside with him to see one of them up close. He passed up the evening's entertainment again although all the rest of the party went to Old Faithful Lodge. The show "Loading the Bus," a spoof on the tourists visiting Yellowstone, was staged by the employees specifically for the Coolidges and proved a

**(Left to right)** ***The President is interested in Superintendent Albright's information about Yellowstone. Bundled up against a breezy day, Mrs. Coolidge displays the fish she has just caught in Lake Yellowstone. From Artist Point, members of the Presidential party admire the spectacular beauty of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. Lined up along the rail are John Coolidge, the First Lady, the President (partially hidden), Superintendent Albright intent upon explanations, Mrs. Horace Albright, Ranger-Naturalist Edmund Sawyer, and Mrs. Everett Sanders.***

great hit. However, the day had been long, and the First Family retired to the hotel after the entertainment.

The Coolidges had been given choice, second-story rooms in the old annex overlooking Old Faithful, while other members of the party were located on the floor directly above. Shortly after Mrs. Albright and I had gone to our rooms, I heard a sudden loud rumble from below. Fearing a problem, I tore down the stairs, rounded the corner, and stopped short as I saw John Coolidge racing down the corridor, pushing a trunk carrier with his mother seated on top. Both of them were laughing uproariously. I sneaked back upstairs as quietly as possible.

August 24: After breakfasting in their rooms, the Coolidges appeared at about nine o'clock, eager to start out on this beautiful, clear morning. Once more I climbed in the backseat behind the President and immediately asked that he let me guide him through the Old Faithful public campground so he could observe the facilities for the enjoyment of the Park by visitors arriving with their own camping equipment. He found this fascinating, asked many questions, and particularly wanted every detail on precautions we took for the protection of campers, their health and safety, their numbers coming to the Park and how this affected the Park.

The drive from Old Faithful to the Lake Hotel, on roads freshly sprinkled with water to keep down the dust, crossed the Continental Divide twice, wound through vast forests and mountains, passed by lakes, and traveled through Spring Canyon or "Holdup Alley," where bears stopped so many cars to beg for handouts that they caused "bear jams." The Alley was also the scene in 1908 of Yellowstone's most famous stagecoach robbery. Coincidentally, the robbery had occurred on this same date, August 24, and a member of the Presidential party, Mode Wineman, had been present at the holdup, just a bystander who was taking pictures.

Our first stop was at Shoshone Point where the President was able to get a very clear view of the Teton Mountains, lying south about fifty miles distant and overlooking the Jackson Hole country. We had spent many years promoting legislation to add the area to Yellowstone Park or to make it a separate park. Mr. Coolidge asked searching questions about the Teton country, was obviously most impressed by its grandeur, and did not forget his experience. When a bill to create the Grand Teton National Park was passed by Congress, the President quickly signed it into law on February 26, 1929, a few days before the end of his term.

One more stop was made at the West Thumb of Lake Yellowstone. Here the Presidential party walked over the hot spring basin on the shore where they were particularly interested in the Fishing Cone and the Paint Pots. Mrs. Coolidge slipped, soaked one foot in the warm water, but seemed totally unconcerned. Also John Coolidge had a nice surprise here by bumping into a college friend from Amherst.

ON THE DRIVE ALONG THE SHORES OF LAKE YELLOWstone, everyone had time to appreciate the beauty of the sparkling waters stretching out for miles to the eastern horizon where the majestic Absaroka range lay. After arriving at the hotel and eating a light lunch in their newly redecorated corner suite overlooking the lake, the Coolidges separated for the afternoon. Having finally shed his business suit, necktie, and stiff straw hat for informal clothes and an old brown felt fishing hat (in which he would not allow his picture to be taken), the President set off with his party across the lake to Frank Island, eleven miles away. The President asked me to join him, but he seemed so anxious about our proposal to take Mrs. Coolidge and John on a cruise of the lake and so fearful of

their safety that I volunteered to stay with them.

Fishing was everything that could have been hoped for on that beautiful, sunny day. The President and his group changed to small rowboats when they got to Frank Island. This time everyone followed local advice as to the lures, and everyone caught fish. The President hauled in six fine cutthroat trout averaging slightly more than two pounds each. He was so busy and happy that the party didn't return to the hotel until 8:00 P.M., causing a lot of speculation among the press representatives.

In the meantime, Billy Nichols of the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company and I took Mrs. Coolidge, her son, and a few others out for a cruise on the lake in two speedboats, *Marion* and *Adelaide*. The ladies wanted to try their hands at fishing. In a very short time, Mrs. Coolidge had landed five trout and Mrs. Sanders two, although both also lost a couple. They were elated, and when the boats headed for home, Mrs. Coolidge said her boat *Marion* could beat the convoy motorboat *Adelaide,* which John was piloting. The race was on with much shouting, especially from Mrs. Coolidge who yelled "faster, faster" until her boat pushed ahead and pulled up to the dock first. I dreaded to think if the President had witnessed this, after I had promised him that extra precautions would be taken for the safety of his family.

Mrs. Coolidge was still filled with energy and enthusiasm; so my wife now took over and escorted most of the same group by car up the lakeside to visit the Mud Volcano, Dragon's Mouth, and other nearby sights, returning at about six o'clock.

After dinner President Coolidge called a conference with Colonel Starling and me. He was elated about his fishing trip and had decided to spend another day at the lake. He told me to arrange for his fishing and an interesting outing for his family. I suggested that the ladies and anyone else who wished to go should drive down to the Jackson Hole. He agreed immediately and said it was a splendid idea. With that, he retired for the night while almost the entire Presidential party and press went over to the Lake Lodge to enjoy the special entertainment by the employees.

Once again they seemed delighted by the novel performances and remained for the dance afterwards. John Coolidge asked to meet two of the performers, Fern and Alta Smith, twins from Kansas Teachers' College at Pittsburgh, Kansas, known as the "Cough Drop Sisters" (after the pictures of the two Smith brothers on the box of cough drops). Having completed their part in the show, the young ladies had retired, but on being told that the President's handsome son wanted to dance with them, they took only minutes to slip into evening gowns and join the Presidential party. After introductions, John Coolidge swept Fern onto the dance floor to the tune of "Whose Baby Are You Now?" He alternated dancing with the sisters until the band stopped playing.

August 25: Early this morning the President, with his fishing companions of the previous day, left the hotel for Squaw Lake, not far from Lake Yellowstone. He had a great morning, caught ten nice trout, and after a quick lunch back at the Lake Hotel, went to Grebe Lake for more fishing. This necessitated an auto trip of twenty miles and a horseback ride of four miles. He was eager to try his hand with rainbow trout, very similar to cutthroat but with a reputation of being harder to land when well hooked and escaping easily when not too entangled with fishing tackle. In the course of the afternoon, a big, bull moose came out of the woods. Chief Ranger Woodring called attention to the animal, but the President ignored him. Thinking perhaps he had not heard, Woodring spoke a bit more loudly: "Mr. President, the moose is wading out in the lake. Huge antlers." The President made no effort to look at

**(Left to right)** ***The President uses binoculars to view the beauty of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. With Superintendent Albright, the President lingers at Artist Point along with Mrs. Coolidge and their son John. In February of 1927, a group visited President Coolidge at the White House to invite him to spend his summer vacation in Wyoming. Pictured are Cody Allen (grandniece of Buffalo Bill Cody), Mrs. Charles E. Winter, the President, Congressman Charles E. Winter from Wyoming, U.S. Senator John B. Kendrick from Wyoming, Superintendent Albright of Yellowstone Park, Stephen T. Mather (Director of the National Park Service), and Mrs. Mary Jester Allen (niece of Buffalo Bill).***

the animal. Finally, Woodring exclaimed: "Oh, look, the moose is feeding from the bottom of the lake with his head entirely under water. It's interesting to see how long they can keep their heads under water." Coolidge then said, "Saw three of 'em the first day we were here." He never did look up, just kept his full attention on the fishing line.

Later on, Woodring noticed the President's line needed more weight on it and reached for the box of lead sinkers. Coolidge immediately asked, "Where are the two sinkers you put in your pocket yesterday?" I suppose he was mildly suggesting a little economy. However, he had a wonderful time and landed four of the trout, the largest being over four pounds. He was particularly excited over this one because it had given him a strenuous battle and it was the largest fish he had caught all summer. Darkness was the only reason he finally came back to the hotel.

MEANWHILE, MY WIFE GRACE TOOK MOST OF THE remainder of the Presidential party by automobile to the Teton country, the Jackson Hole. Mrs. Coolidge asked that Grace ride with her. With grave misgivings about sitting in the backseat as she was very prone to carsickness, my wife joined Mrs. Coolidge, enjoying herself thoroughly. The two Graces discussed husbands, working for the government, children, etcetera. My wife reported how wonderful Mrs. Coolidge was, sweet and lovely to everyone and full of fun except for a couple of times when she mentioned "little Calvin," and then sorrow came over her face as she remembered the death of her younger son such a short time before.

Going back to Yellowstone Park, they traveled rather fast as it was getting dark. This was fine for everyone except my poor wife who got violently carsick. She asked the driver to stop the car, then climbed over Mrs. Coolidge, and headed for the woods. Thoughtful as always, Mrs. Coolidge sent Dr. James Coupal, the White House physician, to her with some of the President's motion sickness medicine, and later she told my wife not to feel bad: "I've lived with a man who has done this so many times I couldn't count."

After dinner everyone except the President walked over to the Lake Lodge for the evening entertainment. Part of the program was a sing-along, one of the songs being "There are smiles from Indiana, there are smiles from Idaho." When it was finished, Mrs. Coolidge jumped to her feet and shouted: "How many here from Massachusetts? Raise your hands!" About a dozen hands went up. Then she clapped her hands above her head and hollered: "Hurrah for Massachusetts. Hurrah!" That was typical of the good sport she was.

August 26: The Presidential party left the Lake Hotel just before 9:00 A.M. and greatly enjoyed the relatively short drive through the Hayden Valley, a vast area of meadows with the Yellowstone River flowing through it, late season wildflowers in profusion along the highway, and occasional flights of birds, even one of Canada geese. However, my concern was that the skies threatened rain all the way to the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, but just as we reached Artist's Point, the clouds broke up, and the spectacular canyon was flooded with sunlight. The Coolidges were enthralled, the only time in the Park that the President showed any enthusiasm (except for his fish).

When the Coolidges arrived at the Canyon Hotel, they went to the top of the great lounge for which the hotel was famous and received the ovation of about 500 people while the orchestra far below them played "The Star Spangled Banner." Then they moved along to their rooms and rested most of the afternoon. Mrs. Coolidge and John did slip quietly outside and walk down the 500 steps to the top of the Lower Falls.

When they came back, they urged the President to join them at the bear-feeding grounds, open space where leftover food from the hotel kitchen was dumped several times a day. A ranger with a rifle was on duty there at all times, but the bears were vastly more interested in the food than in the people. On this particular day the animals were unusually entertaining. When two huge grizzlies with cubs showed up, other bears immediately scampered away and circled the edges. One black bear accidentally backed up under the railing restricting tourists, climbed straight over rows of log seats, and headed for the Coolidges. Secret Service men and rangers quickly steered the bear in a different direction, and the President immediately returned to the hotel. Mrs. Coolidge and John, however, didn't give up and stayed to watch intently until dinner time.

The President had promised me one social contact, a meeting with fifty members of the Wyoming Press Association. In the lounge I tried to introduce all the members to the President, but he had a machinelike maneuver of handshaking that pulled them past him so quickly that in only a few minutes everybody had a chance to meet him. I turned around to see if the group was ready for a brief address by President Coolidge. When I turned back, he was already going up the stairs.

Shortly thereafter, the President requested that two bellhops by the names of Everett and William Sawyer from Lincoln, Nebraska, come to his room. He had heard that the boys claimed they were related to him. They didn't know how, just knew their mother had said so. Coolidge questioned them for a minute or so, told them he was a genealogy buff, and then quickly explained their relationship in a warm and friendly way. After they left, the President met with Jack E. Haynes, the official photographer of the Park. He presented the Coolidges with three beautiful photographs, colored in oil by Mrs. Haynes. The President was very interested in the fact that Haynes's father was the official photographer for President Chester Arthur when he visited the Yellowstone area in 1883.

Dinner was a lovely affair. The President had received some game hens from the Harriman ranch in Idaho and invited Mr. and Mrs. Harry Child, my wife, and me to join his family. The meal was served in the Presidential suite, and we had a wonderful time even though the President rarely spoke. Obviously thinking of this later in the evening, Mrs. Coolidge laughingly confided to my wife: "I suppose I don't notice my husband's scarcity of words. You know, before I was married, I taught in a school for the deaf and dumb."

WHEN DINNER WAS OVER, MRS. COOLIDGE EXPRESSED a desire to "go dancing." So we left the President in his suite and joined other Presidential party members as well as Mr. and Mrs. Billy Nichols and their daughter, Adelaide, in the great lounge where the bottom tier had been cleared of furniture for a dance floor. Gene Quaw led an excellent orchestra for a hundred or so dancers. Mrs. Coolidge danced every dance with men in our party. She was a lovely dancer, and when my turns came around, I enjoyed every minute with her except that I had to keep my right arm extended to keep other dancers from touching her. People meant no harm. They simply wished to touch her and probably go back home and say they had danced with Mrs. Coolidge. Everyone had such a good time that we prevailed upon the musicians to play an extra hour. And after the last number, Mrs. Coolidge led our party back to the Presidential suite for refreshments—tall lemonades. The President slept through it all.

August 27: We made an early departure from the Canyon Hotel at 7:30 A.M. The night had been very cold, and the grass

**(Left to right)** ***Superintendent Albright and Secret Service men attend the President at Tower Falls. Mother Bear Geraldine shows off her three cubs to Mrs. Coolidge, the President, Colonel W. E. Starling, Superintendent Albright, and Chief Ranger Sam Woodring. Horace Albright is shown with his granddaughter Susan Ford Isaacson on December 8, 1980, the day that he received the Medal of Freedom, awarded by the President of the United States. Fittingly, Mrs. Isaacson wears a National Park Service uniform as temporary ranger in Kings Canyon National Park, California.***

and trees were well covered with frost along the Yellowstone River as we drove back to Lake Junction to turn on the road to Cody, the east entrance to the Park, about eighty miles away. We stopped at Sylvan Lodge after crossing the Absaroka mountain range through Sylvan Pass at an altitude of 8,559 feet. While the President was being briefed about the National Forest by J. N. Langworthy, its Supervisor, Mrs. Coolidge shopped in a curio store and purchased a silver link bracelet for $1.50.

Leaving there, we traveled twenty-five miles along the North Fork of the Shoshone River and stopped briefly at Pahaska Teepee, Buffalo Bill's hunting lodge, now a tourist resort. When we arrived at the great Shoshone Dam (now known as the Buffalo Bill Dam), I reviewed the reclamation project with the President, one of the earliest programs of water conservation for irrigation and hydroelectric power. However, he would not leave the car as he said he suffered from dizziness when looking down from heights. I left the President with Reclamation Project Manager L. H. Mitchell, and took Mrs. Coolidge and John down along the dam.

We arrived at the town of Cody about noon and were met at *The Scout,* the famous outdoor sculpture by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. We were greeted by a contingent of mounted cowboys and a committee appointed by Governor Frank Emerson. The Presidential party continued to the Buffalo Bill Museum which they toured for about half an hour. When they were leaving, Miss Jane Garlow, granddaughter of Buffalo Bill, presented Mrs. Coolidge with a beautiful shawl, a gift from the people of Cody. The Coolidges rode from the Museum to the Burlington Railroad station through crowds of cheering people.

At the station Mr. Sanders gave me a check for $7.00 to pass on to the driver of the President's car, as he felt the President's tip of $3.00 was not sufficient. The Coolidges were the last of their party to climb aboard the train. The President shook my hand firmly and, always brief in expressing himself, said: "Thank you. I've had the time of my life." Mrs. Coolidge leaned over and in a low voice confided to me, "I never had a finer time, and after we get out of the White House, we are coming back and do as we darn please." The train pulled out for Rapid City right on time at one o'clock, and we headed back for Yellowstone Park. The sunshine left with the Coolidges, for we went from one storm to the next all the way back to Mammoth Hot Springs.

Several days after the President and his family left Cody, Wyoming, we received a hand-written letter, dated August 28, 1927, from Grace Coolidge. It read in part:

> Now that we are back again, I cannot settle down to business until I have expressed again my appreciation not alone for what you did for us but for what you are doing for us all and for our country.
>
> As we were driving to church this morning, I referred again to the glorious week we have had and I was advised by one high in authority to refrain from talking too much about it lest people think that I thought I had discovered the Park. Well, I'm glad somebody did and that others have worked and planned that we who follow may have the benefits.
>
> When I am out of a job, I shall apply!

**Horace M. Albright**'*s latest book is* The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913–33, *as told to Robert Cahn, published in 1985 by Howe Brothers, Salt Lake City.*

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*(Continued from page 18)*

1955 for $150,000 because his wife wanted a piece from the collection, the wedding dress of Baby Doe Tabor, wife of Colorado mining magnate Horace Tabor. Harrah moved the museum to Reno, where it was eventually purchased by Holiday Inn. Holiday Inn prefers not to disclose the amount Martin paid for the museum's inventory, but company spokesmen do say they are pleased that the collection has remained intact.

**Classic Westerns** like *Shane, Lonely Are The Brave,* and *The Wild Bunch* will flicker across the screen for Western film devotees this July at the second annual National Western Film Festival in Ogden, Utah. Actors, stunt men, and producers who worked on the films will be present to talk about their roles, describing the hard work and the fun that went into creating the slick celluloid images. Last year's Western dignitaries included Ben Johnson, Richard Farnsworth, James Cash, and Monty Montana, who demonstrated his rope tricks by lassoing a few members of the audience. Seminars and workshops on topics like the role of the casting director and the ABCs of stunt riding have featured old hands like John Wayne's double Jock Mahoney. This year, movie stars will honor fellow Western troupers by presenting Golden Lariat Awards to them for past outstanding performances. The festival runs July 17–20, in conjunction with the Ogden Pioneer Days Rodeo. For information, call (801) 399-8288 in Utah or 1-800-All-Utah outside Utah.

**Too much of a good thing.** Most desert dwellers would be happy to have more water, but the recent rise in Utah's Great Salt Lake has some locals wringing more than just their hands. The great inland sea is at its highest point since Utah was admitted to statehood in 1896, according to county flood-control director R. L. Holzworth. Geologically speaking, the level isn't so alarming when compared with the fact that the entire surrounding valley was once under water, but try discussing geologic relevance with local industries whose factories are threatened.

The lake's gain of eleven feet over the past four years has dismayed the six businesses that operate salt- and mineral-extracting plants along the shrinking shores. Aside from flooding, which companies are trying to halt with dikes, additional water dilutes the brine, requiring a longer and more complicated extraction process.

Holzworth states that the lake's rise has affected only localized areas of Salt Lake County. About four or five low-lying homes have been flooded, and the Southern Pacific Railroad has spent millions to protect their

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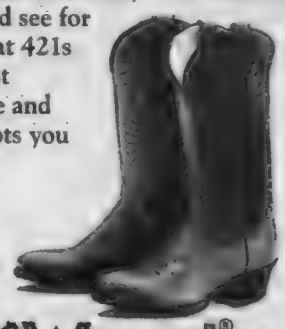

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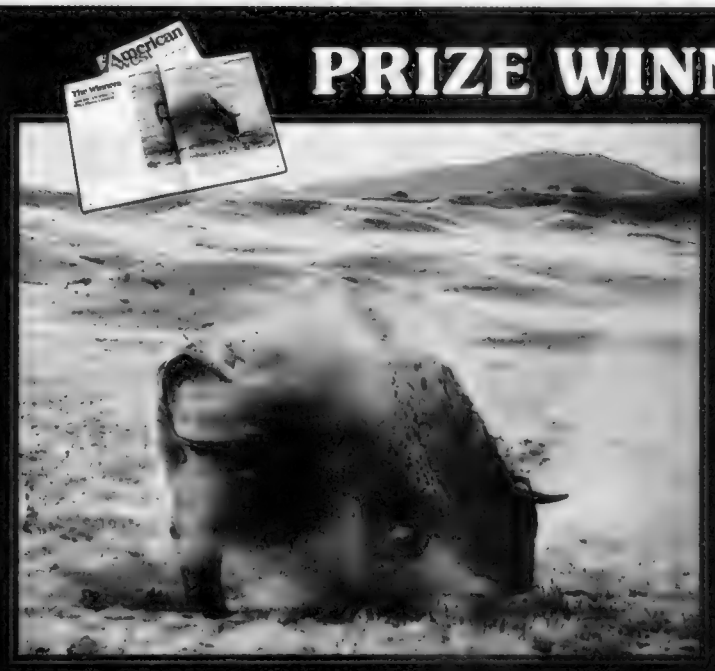


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causeway, which crosses a stretch of the briny water. Union Pacific Railroad, too, has been forced to elevate their tracks in the area.

In no way does this mean that the Great Salt Lake is inaccessible. Holzworth claims the flooding is in isolated areas. "You'd probably need a tour guide to locate the flooding." Despite discouraging sights like that of the half-submerged Saltair amusement park, he feels there's no reason for people to shy away and miss a chance to float on the saltiest water around.

**Symbols of strength and agility,** birds of prey are admired worldwide, and several raptors receive special protection from our government. To educate the public regarding the significant role that eagles, hawks, owls, and the like have played in North American cultures, the Pacific Northwest Raptor Rehabilitation Corporation of Eagle Point, Oregon, has organized the efforts of Southern Oregon State College, the American Indian Art Institute in New Mexico, and several independent contributors. They have put together an exhibit of artworks that incorporate feathers, talons, and other parts of several protected species. (The Pacific Northwest Raptor Rehabilitation Corporation arranged to provide the American Indian Art Institute with carcasses from birds unable to recover from injury or illness.)

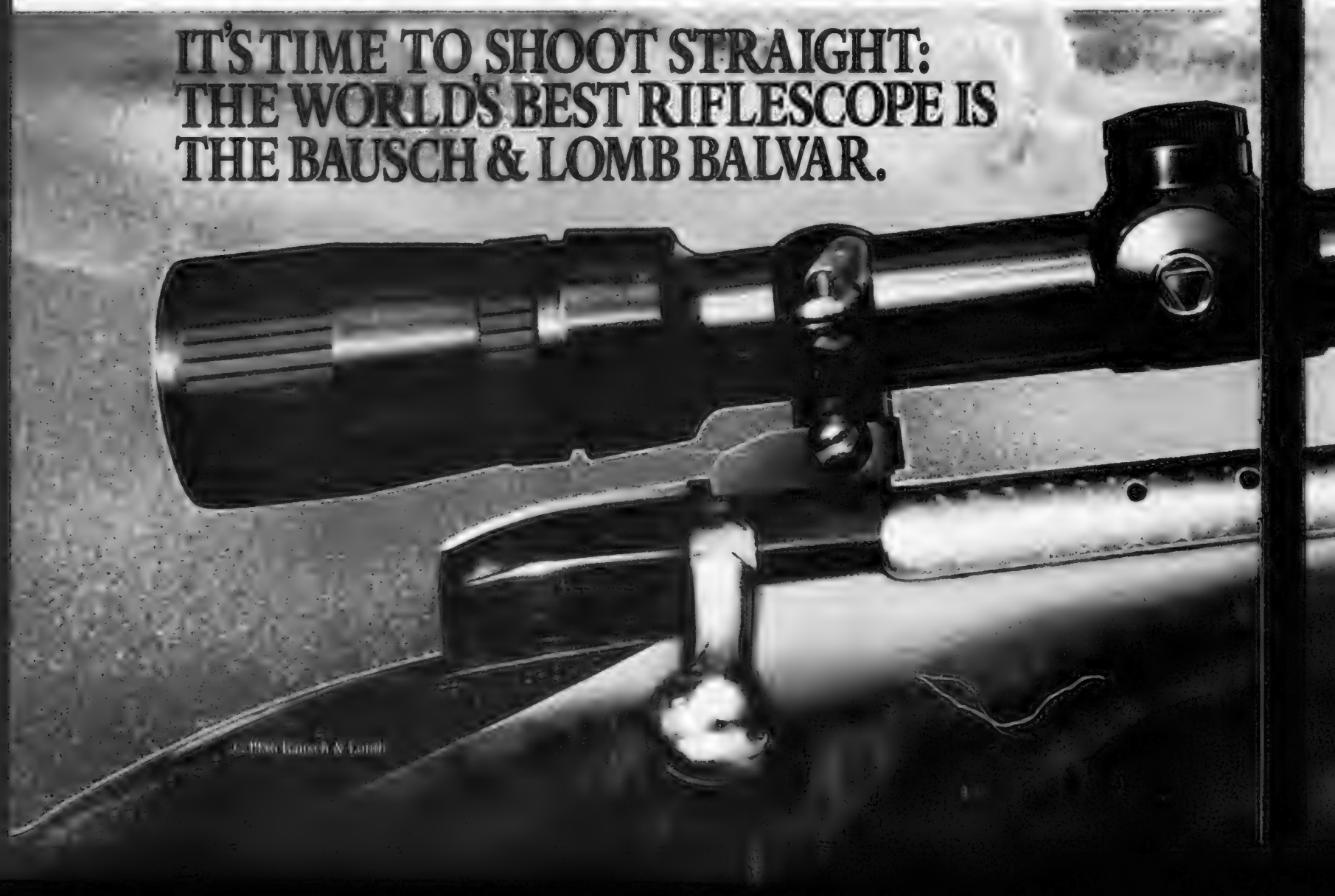
Original art in various media using these quills, talons, and feathers—as well as other unusual fine art materials such as leather, fur, and silver—have been created at the American Indian Art Institute. A catalogue, an educational textbook, and special suitcase exhibits with interpretive information for elementary schools were also prepared to help explain the exhibit and the role of birds of prey within the spiritual precepts of American Indian cultures. The grand opening of the raptor-art exhibit—with Indian dance, drama, and a show of original Indian fashions (also using bird feathers and other pieces)—is planned for December of 1986, after which the exhibit will tour the country.

**The world's first missile silo museum,** constructed at an abandoned Titan 2 site just south of Tucson, Arizona, is opening to visitors this summer. The eighteen active Titan 2 silos that once encircled Tucson have been deactivated, due to a strategic weapons modernization program initiated by President Reagan. In accordance with Salt Treaty rules, one of the Titan 2 intercontinental ballistic missiles housed at the site was punctured twice by Air Force personnel and openly displayed for one month beginning in late October 1985, so that Soviet satellites could photograph the missile and be sure treaty conditions were fulfilled.

The silo, which reaches ten stories into the ground, has been reconstructed so that visitors can look down upon the top of the disabled Titan 2 and also get a side view of the missile from a lower level. The control area is designed to look as if the operators have just left their posts. A short briefing and video will accompany visitor tours. The missile silo museum is overseen by the Pima Air Museum of Pima County, the third-largest aircraft museum in the country.

**Valuable archeological holdings** that may lie buried under a rodeo arena at Oklahoma's historic Fort Gibson are raising a bit of controversy between history buffs and rodeo fans. The rodeo was built on fort grounds in the 1950s by the local Roundup Club, which still operates the arena. At the time of construction, Fort Gibson was under the jurisdiction of the Tourism and Recreation department. In 1983, the fifty-five acre park was transferred to the Oklahoma Historical Society's authority.

The rodeo arena lies between a group of nineteenth century stone buildings and a reconstructed log stockade. According to the historical society's Don Wesfall, some people feel the arena location detracts from the fort's

aesthetic value. Right now, the society is trying to work out a compromise so that the interests of both history buffs and rodeo fans can be served.

**Support your national parks.** The National Park Foundation and Post Natural Raisin Bran have launched a campaign to raise money for the National Park System. Post is enlisting consumer support by contributing $.50 to the National Park Enhancement Fund for every Post Natural Raisin Bran proof-of-purchase redeemed, up to $250,000. The money raised will be used to develop interpretive and educational programs in the park system, as well as improve trails in ten parks across the country. The work is being done by members of the Youth Conservation Corps, fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds employed for eight weeks during the summer by the Department of the Interior.

William Penn Mott, Jr., Director of the National Park Service, believes that "the efforts of Post and the National Park Foundation will serve as a benchmark for galvanizing public involvement in our national parks." Singer John Denver is the celebrity spokesman for the campaign. Individuals are encouraged to contribute directly to the National Park Enhancement Fund or to organize their own fundraising event.

**Enter into the realm of a wild West** where every cowboy is a hero and the skies are not cloudy all day with "The West of the Imagination," a six-part series airing on public television stations across the country this fall. Each episode explores the myths that surround popular images of the West by dramatizing historic events and looking at the work of some of the mythmakers.

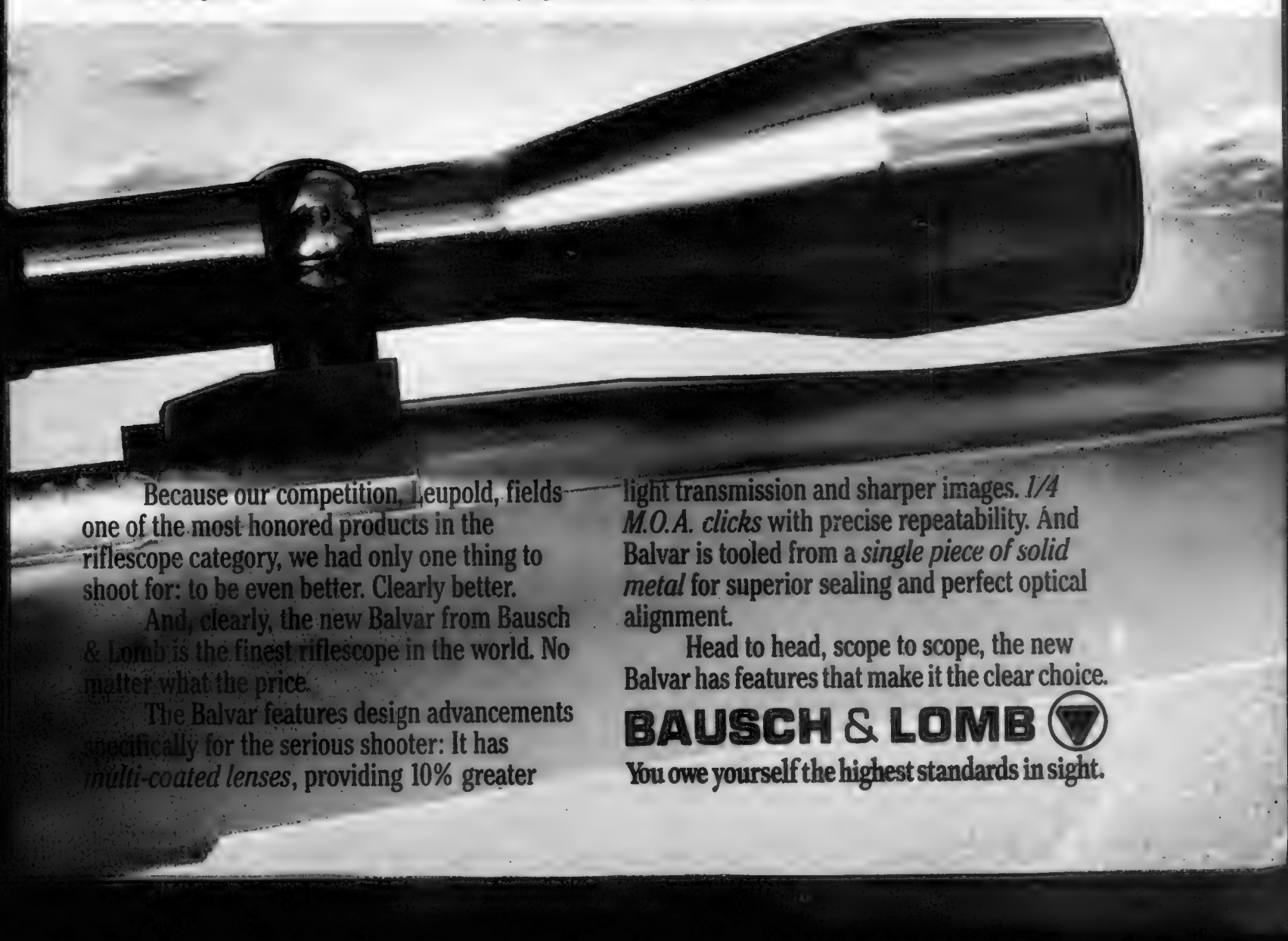
The series chronicles the era of early exploration up to modern times, focusing on themes like the 1849 Gold Rush, the Texas Revolution, the folklore of the cowboy, Buffalo Bill and his Wild West show, and the Dust Bowl years. Each time-period is reflected in the works of Western artists, photographers, authors, and cinematographers, examining how their interpretations influence our view of the West. Notable mythmakers include artists Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Remington, and Charles Russell, photographer William H. Jackson, dime-novel author Ned Buntline, and singer Willie Nelson.

Narrated by James Whitmore, the series was created by Pulitzer prize–winning author and historian William Goetzmann and produced by Dallas's public television station KERA.

**A paleontological puzzle piece** that has been mystifying scientists for fifty years has been put back in place by Museum of Northern Arizona geologist Scott Madsen and volunteer Keith Becker. The team rediscovered a dinosaur track site in northern Arizona last February using a photograph taken in the 1930s, the only clue to the tracks' location. The photograph is all that remains from the first scientific study conducted by Dr. Barnum Brown and Roland T. Bird in the early part of this century.

Since the tracks lie on the Navajo Reservation, permission was obtained from the Navajo tribe before Madsen and Becker began their search. The trackway was found in the Moenave Formation, one of four such formations that make up the Glen Canyon Group in the western portion of the Painted Desert. Tracks ranging over a fifteen-million-year period, from the Late Triassic to the Early Jurassic, have been discovered in each of the other formations. Dating back 208 million years, the Moenave tracks enable scientists to trace the evolution of dinosaur footprints through the Glen Canyon Group. According to museum geology curator Michael Morales, northern Arizona is one of the few areas in the world where dinosaur footprints span a significant amount of time.

By examining the structure of the footprints, Madsen and his coworkers have deduced that the tracks belong to at least four

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types of dinosaurs. Claw marks at the front edge of the prints indicate that these giant lizards were carnivores. By measuring the stride and step length, scientists can even calculate the speed at which the dinosaurs were traveling.

The museum is not releasing the exact location of the track site, due to the vandalism that has occurred at earlier finds. Work is being done on the site throughout the summer.

**Acid Rain in the West.** Because acidity levels of rain and snow in the West are lower than in the northeastern United States and northern Europe, many people have thought that Western forests are safe from the serious damage caused by acid rain in the Northeast and Germany. However, a recent report on a comprehensive study of acid rain in the West by the World Resource Institute cautions that these levels—safe enough in water falling on deep, alkaline soils—could cause considerably more harm when falling in the high mountain ranges of the West. Here the ground is often rocky and steep and, therefore, less capable of neutralizing the acidity. On steep slopes, rain and snowmelt often run downgrade too rapidly to be absorbed by the thin layers of soil that do exist. In fact, the World Resource Institute (a nonpartisan policy-research center in Washington, D.C.) found two Western lakes that were temporarily acidified—one near Crested Butte, Colorado, and one in California's Sequoia National Park. Later, the normal balance of acid and alkalinity returned in both these lakes, but temporary acidification is known to foreshadow acid-laden lakes that can no longer bounce back or support most of the life within them.

Areas considered at greatest risk include some of our most beautiful mountain ranges in Yosemite, Sequoia, Mt. Rainier, Yellowstone, Glacier, and other national parks. Because much of the precipitation in the mountainous West comes in the form of snow, the danger of acid is compounded. Up to half the acids in accumulated snows can be released in the first ten percent of the meltwaters, causing "acid pulses" and temporarily acidified lakes. Acid rains, snow, and dry particles are believed to be caused mostly by emissions from smelters, transportation vehicles, and power plants, although a smaller percentage is also caused by such natural phenomena as volcanic emissions.

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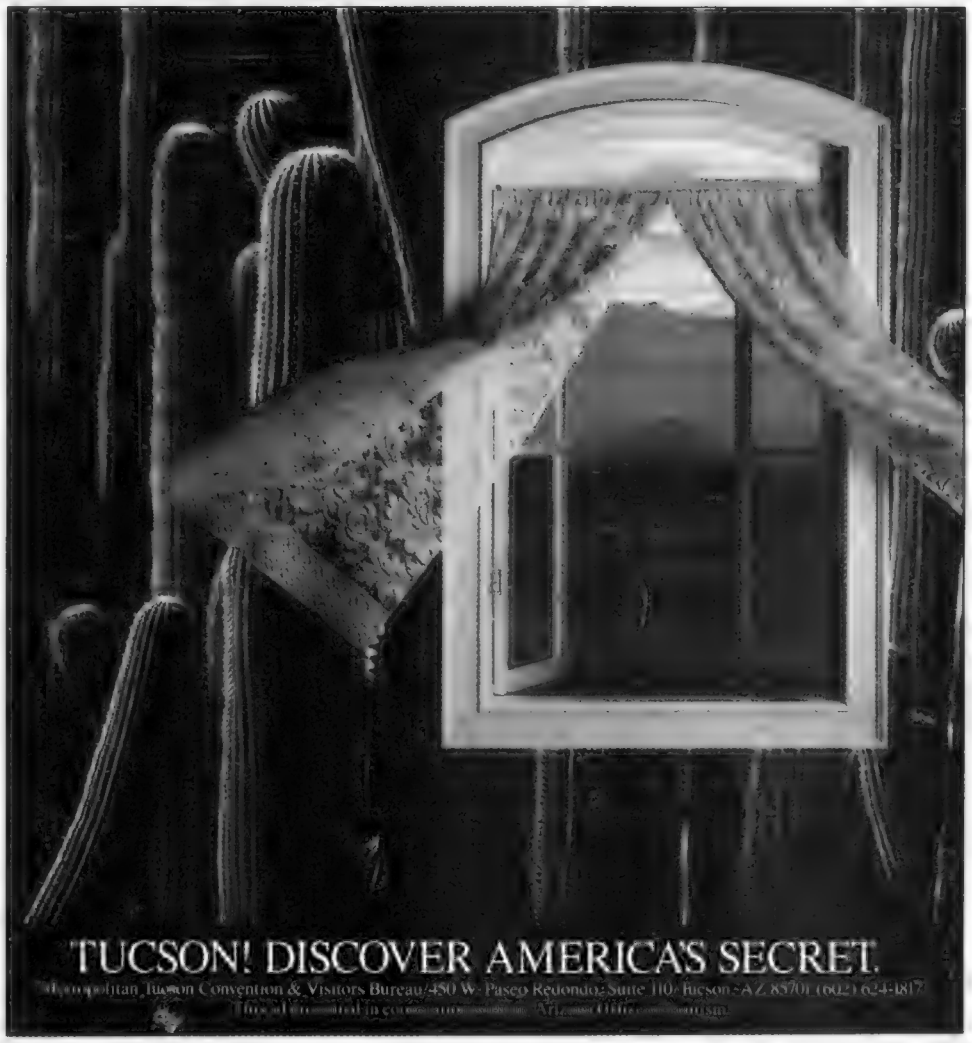

*Editor's note:* When the accompanying article was completed, co-author Larry Wilson hand-delivered the manuscript and photographs to our editorial office in Tucson. At the same time, he visited the Tucson Art Museum to see a cased bolt-action sporting rifle that had just been completed by the David Miller Company, Arizona gunmakers. The rifle was the last in the Safari Club International "Big Five" rifle series and had sold at the record price (for a modern firearm) of $201,000 in February 1986.

Wilson's reaction to the Miller "Leopard" rifle-set led to the unprecedented foldout center page in this issue.

Having viewed literally hundreds of thousands of guns over a thirty-five-year period, in over a thousand museum and private collections, Wilson stated unequivocally:

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**(Preceding page)** ***The leopard scene on the bottom metal was taken from an especially commissioned painting by Guy Coheleach. Unique in its method of attachment, the steel plate has no screws to interrupt the engraving; the manner of fastening the plate is not visible.***

**(Below, l. to r.)** ***An elegant case was fashioned of South American ironwood and lined in grey ultrasuede with brown trim to hold the prize rifle and its accessories. Steve Lindsay did the engraving on the accessories, while Ray Wielgus did the gold inlay and the antiqueing of the brass hardware on the case. Steve Hoel made the knife. A close-up of the bolt-handle side of the rifle shows again the beautiful bolt knob that appears on our cover. Decorated with a contemporary design unique to the David Miller Company, the steel buttplate commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the Model 70.*** **Joe Bishop Collection.**

**Photography credits:**
**Sid Latham**
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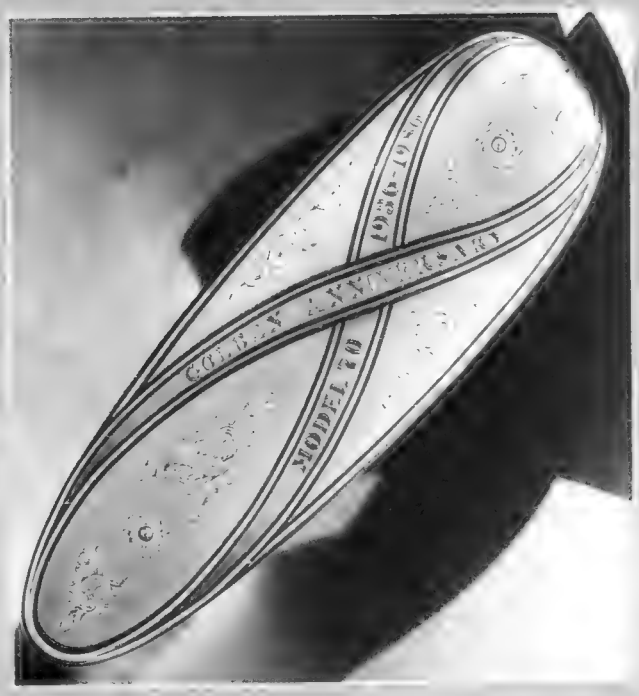
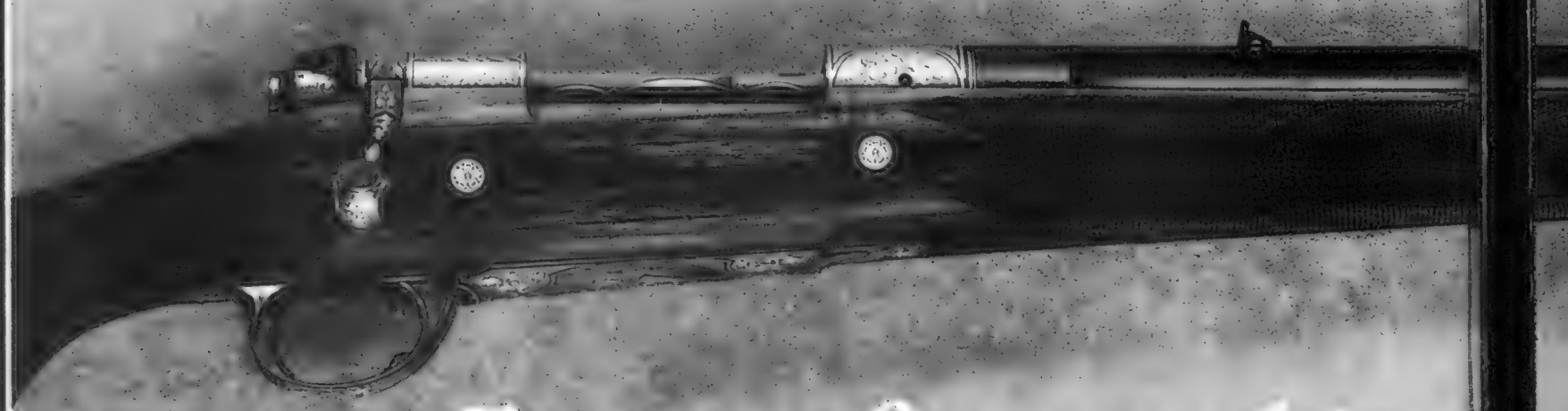
**Captions by authors**

# THE ART OF AMERICAN ARMS

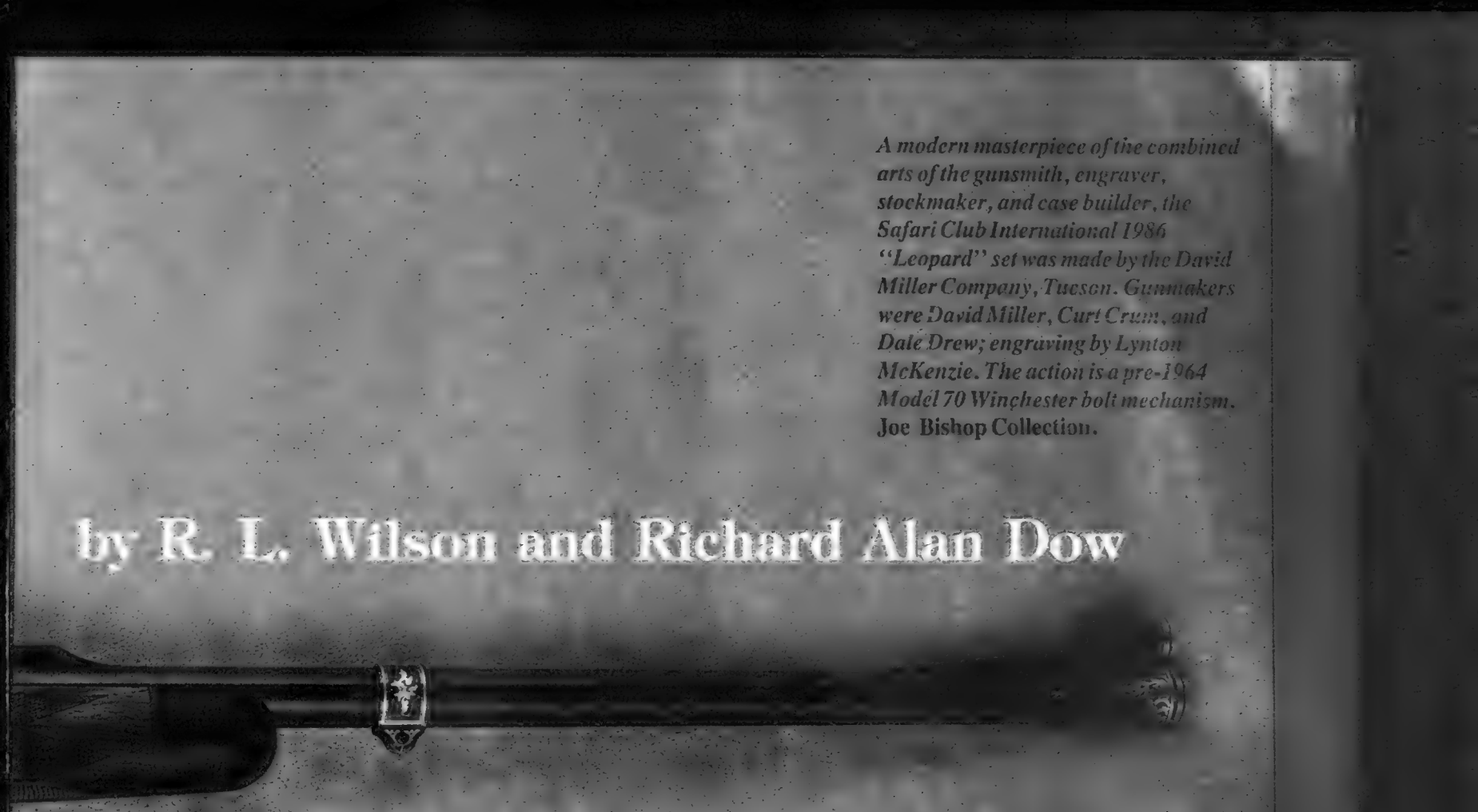
## Fine craftsmanship converts arms to art



# THE ART OF AMERICAN ARMS



## Fine craftsmanship converts arms to art



*A modern masterpiece of the combined arts of the gunsmith, engraver, stockmaker, and case builder, the Safari Club International 1986 "Leopard" set was made by the David Miller Company, Tucson. Gunmakers were David Miller, Curt Crum, and Dale Drew; engraving by Lynton McKenzie. The action is a pre-1964 Model 70 Winchester bolt mechanism.* **Joe Bishop Collection.**

# by R. L. Wilson and Richard Alan Dow

SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS OF DECORATIVE art have come to us through the custom of embellishing functional items. Through applied art, the practical and serviceable are elevated to the beautiful and exotic. Nowhere has this tradition been more highly developed, more rooted in history, than in the engraving and enriching of fine firearms. The loving craftsmanship that gunsmiths have brought to handmade arms over the centuries invites equally loving and careful decoration.

Runic inscriptions on sword blades were believed to imbue their bearers with mystical power. Etched surfaces of graceful armor gave the appearance of rich fabrics of civilian dress. And the inlaying and engraving of handguns and sporting arms down to the present (an increasingly difficult art as metals have become harder and more resistant to the engraver's tools) lend an elegance that transcends their technical nature.

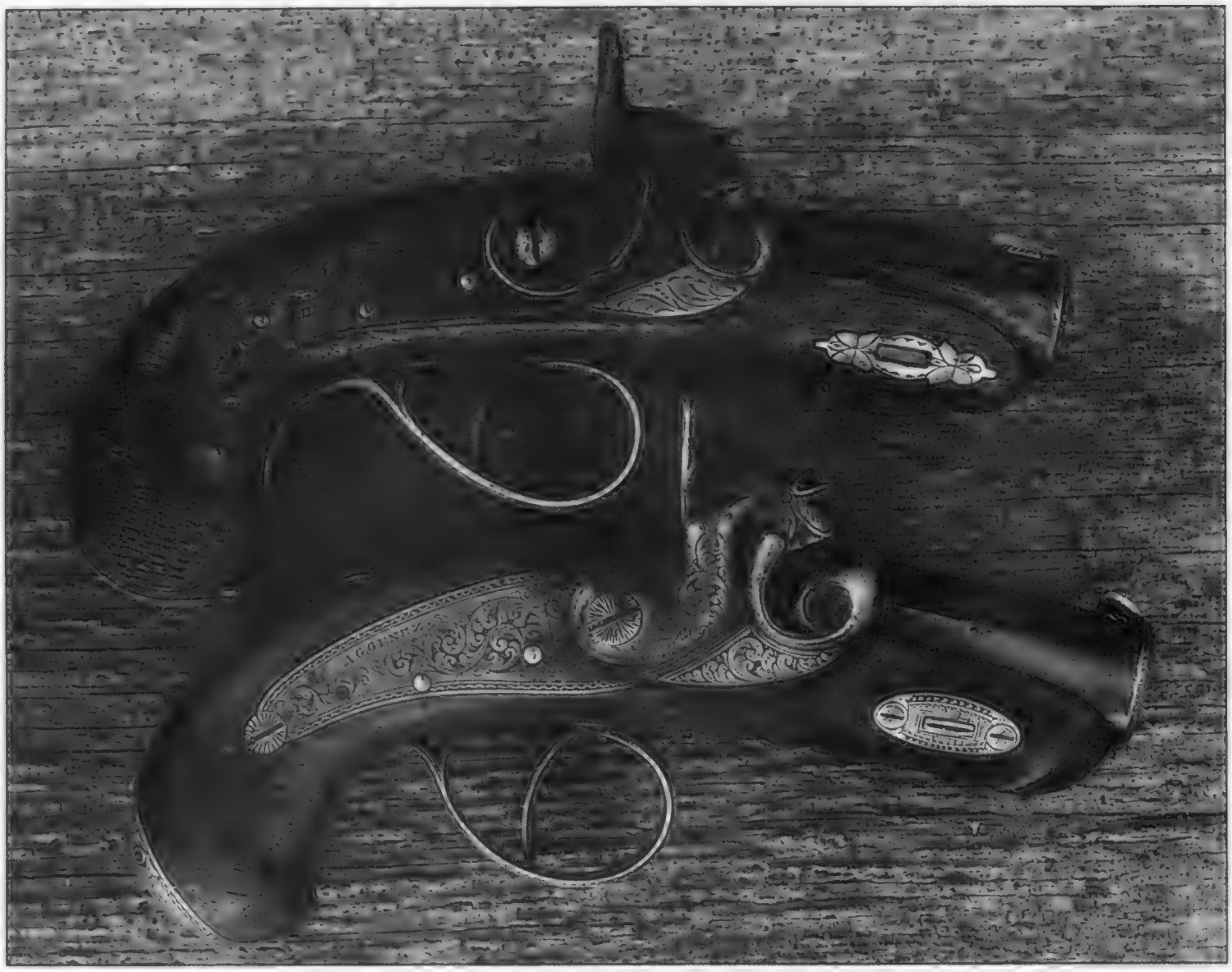
The methods of engraving firearms, and the tools used, have remained virtually unchanged since the seventeenth century. Slender chisels in various shapes, called scribers, are tapped with small jewelers' hammers to form the basic design and shading. The graver, a shortened scriber with a bulbous wooden handle, is used to produce fine detail. Vices hold the piece being worked, magnifying glasses permit the artist to see the minute detail, and draftsmen's dividers measure the correct dimensions. The rest depends on the skill and artistry of the engraver.

Gun engraving has spawned a host of masters. In Europe, the earliest makers employed engravers to embellish their handmade arms. The Italian firm of Beretta, the oldest industrial company in Europe and still in the hands of the founding family, has offered embellished arms since the Renaissance. The British firm of Holland & Holland, creator of coveted shotguns, dates from 1835.

In America engraving was standard on certain arms, especially the Long Rifle (the fabled "Kentucky Rifle"), and became a by-product of the machine age. Henry Deringer's pocket pistols, a product of hand craftsmanship and early machinery, were nearly always engraved. Mass-produced "pepperbox" multi-barrelled pistols of the 1830s and 1840s often sported hand engraving as standard, and the demand for specialist gun engravers was strong. When Colonel Sam Colt's first revolvers issued from his short-lived Paterson, New Jersey, plant, most of them were plain except for engraving on the cylinders, which Colt cleverly executed with roll dies. Only a few Paterson Colts were hand engraved, but they bolstered the demand for craftsmen able to execute such work.

Although most manufacturers no longer offered engraving as a standard feature by about 1850, deluxe-grade guns were maintained in inventory and produced to the special order of military and civilian clients. Samuel Colt was in the forefront of this development, promoting his business and seeking government contracts both in America and abroad through carefully calculated presentations of engraved revolvers to heads of state and to military and naval officers. Deluxe guns were made in Colt's new Hartford factory almost as soon as the doors opened in 1847. Sharps, Volcanic, and Smith & Wesson followed Colt's lead within a few years.

*(Text continued on page 46)*




*At top is a German-silver mounted Henry Deringer percussion pistol by the famed Philadelphia gunmaker whose name became synonymous with pocket or vest-sized hideaway handguns. The craftsmanship should be contrasted with the exquisite quality, style, and overall detail of the deringer at bottom, by A. G. Genez of New York. The Genez pistol is generally considered to be the finest – in design and quality – of deringer-style pistols known to students. Engraving by Nimschke, and so signed (on lockplate, covered by the hammer); silver mounts. c. 1855.* **R. L. Wilson Collection.**

*Presentation set of flintlock pistols by Simeon North, Middletown, Connecticut, c. 1818. The commission for creation of two pairs of this quality, as gifts from the State of Connecticut to Thomas McDonough and Isaac Hull (heroes of the War of 1812), specifically stipulated that all work would be done within the state. The idea was to showcase native craftsmanship. Mounts of gold-washed silver. The sets proved to be the finest American flintlock pistols made, at least up to modern times.* **National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.**

***Made in Philadelphia, Hartford, and Bridgeport, the guns of the Sharps Rifle Company reflect their age of manufacture in quality and decoration. Most were plain service arms; those relatively few deluxe pieces boast varying degrees of engraving and stock work. The same Gustave Young whose influence was so strong on Colt engraving (from 1852 to today) also executed enough Sharps (and guns by other makers) to dominate largely the firm's styles of embellishment. All three of these rifles show the work of Young himself or his shop.*** **Greg Martin Collection.**

*Here is still another masterpiece of nineteenth century gunmaking artistry by Gustave Young: the presentation 1860 Army Colt revolvers used as diplomatic gifts by President Abraham Lincoln to King Charles XV of Sweden, 1863. The Swedish monarch, a keen arms collector, fired the revolvers once, had them cleaned, and thereafter admired them as part of one of the finest arms collections in Europe.* **The Royal Armoury, Stockholm.**

*Evolution of gun engraving on Colt firearms in the period c. 1848 to 1864: At top, an 1848 Baby Dragoon with the "early vine style" scroll; next, an 1849 Pocket Model with the "donut scroll"; third from top, an 1851 Navy with the Gustave Young scroll (introduced at Colt in 1852); and at bottom, a Third Model Dragoon with the Young scroll in what was known as "extra engraved."* **Greg Martin Collection.**

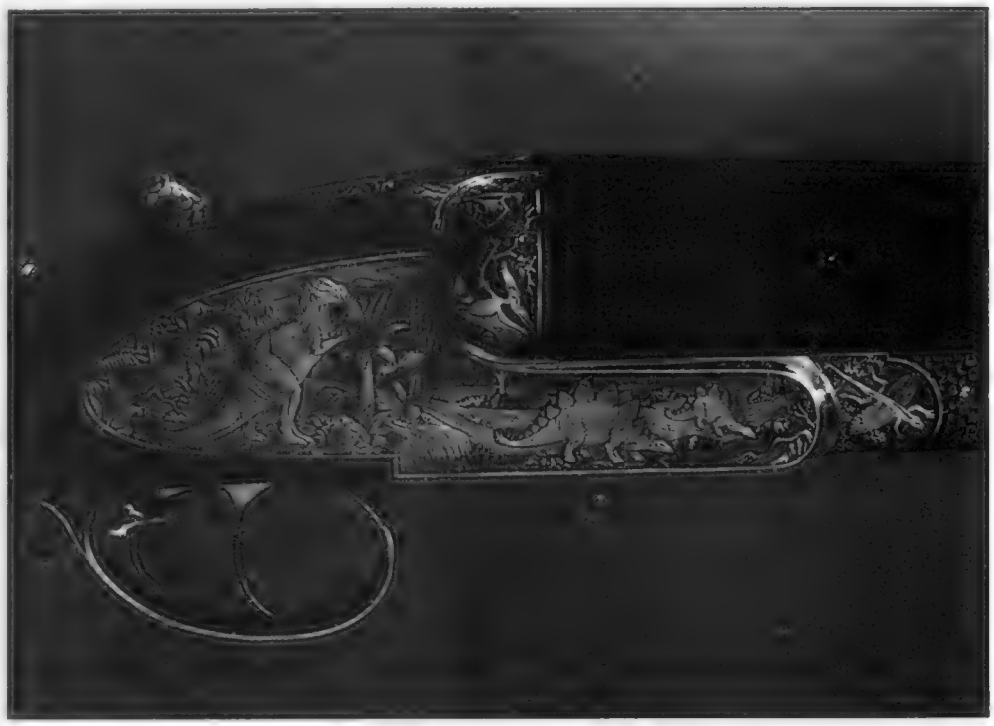
## Fine Guns in the Public View

An ambitious project to acquaint the general public with fine embellished guns as works of art is being planned, sponsored by the Buffalo Bill Historical Center of Cody, Wyoming, and the William Benton Museum of Art of the University of Connecticut, Storrs.

An important activity of the project gets under way in London this month (July) with the filming of a feature motion picture, *Fine Guns*. The unusual "star" of this movie is the 500/.450 Double Barrel Holland & Holland nitro express rifle that was presented to President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909 by leading English statesmen, sportsmen, and clergy. Photography will begin at the headquarters of Holland & Holland, Ltd., famous makers of best quality guns, and will continue in France and in the United States during July. The main part of the movie will be shot in August and September on locations in Kenya, Tanzania, and Botswana. Roosevelt, who helped select the features of the gun (serial #19109), spent eleven months in East Africa on safari in 1909 and 1910, carrying the firearm with him.

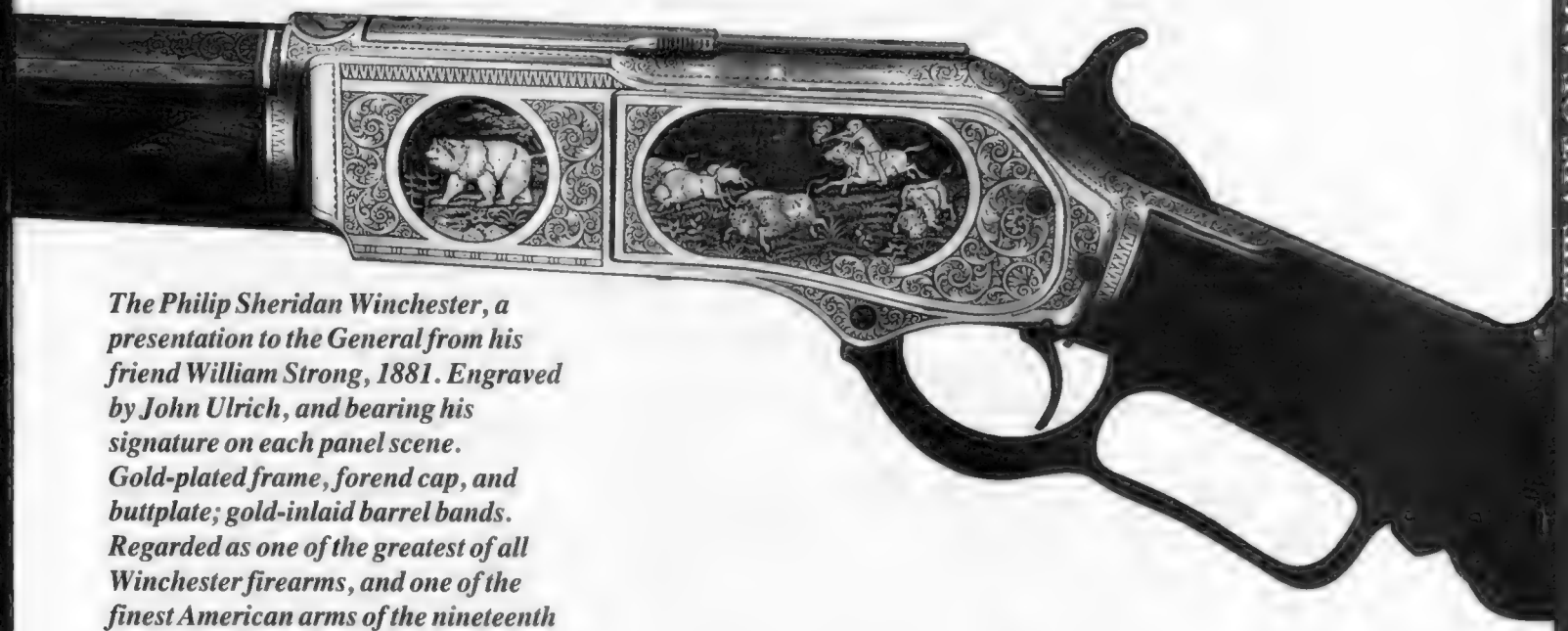
The producer/director of *Fine Guns*, George Butler, has disclosed: "We have discovered the most remarkable original 35mm motion picture footage that Roosevelt made on this early trip to Africa at the beginning of this century. In the film you can see Teddy Roosevelt collecting specimens for the Smithsonian Institution and other museums, and hunting with his son Kermit as clearly as if it had happened yesterday." White Mountain Films, Inc. of New York City plans to release this story about the traditions of fine guns and hunting for worldwide theatrical distribution at the end of 1987.

The major thrust of the overall project is to exhibit in museum settings a selection of some two hundred and fifty of the finest works of American gunsmiths and engravers. R. L. Wilson (co-author of the accompanying article) is writing a book about the exhibit, which will show not only at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and the William Benton Museum of Art but at a number of other major art museums in the United States and Canada. The first presentation of its kind, the exhibit is expected to help develop a widespread appreciation for the tradition, craftsmanship, and beauty of fine guns as objects of decorative art. The year 1988 is set as the tentative opening date for this unique traveling exhibition.



(Top) *The Saurian, a 4 bore shotgun by Holland & Holland, in celebration of their sesquicentennial, 1985. Engraved and sculpted with dinosaur scenes and related creatures and vegetation by the Brown brothers, Alan and Paul. A brochure published by Holland's, in classic British understatement, noted: "This gun, with its [equally magnificent] case and chest, may be considered as one of the finest works of art created by a British gunmaker in this century."* **Courtesy of Holland & Holland, Ltd.**

(Bottom) *The rich tradition of embellishment established by the European gunmakers is represented here by a chiselled, gilded, engraved, and exquisitely stocked wheelock and matchlock gun of c. 1600, the metal decoration by the German artisan Emanuel Sadeler. The action or lock makers emerged from guilds of locksmiths; the embellishers in metalwork from armorer's guilds and related groups of metal decorators; and stockmakers came largely from furniture specialists.* **Armeria Reale, Turin, Italy.**



*The Philip Sheridan Winchester, a presentation to the General from his friend William Strong, 1881. Engraved by John Ulrich, and bearing his signature on each panel scene. Gold-plated frame, forend cap, and buttplate; gold-inlaid barrel bands. Regarded as one of the greatest of all Winchester firearms, and one of the finest American arms of the nineteenth century.* **Greg Martin Collection.**

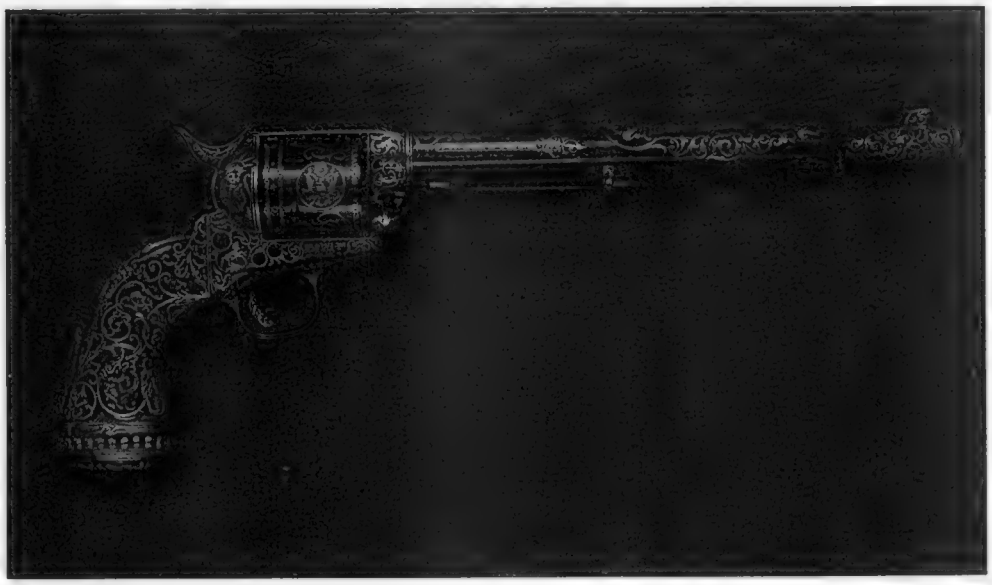
*This Winchester Model 1866 was engraved for the factory by Gustave Young, intended as a show piece. The Goddess of Liberty panel scene at left was inspired by bank-note engraving.* **Greg Martin Collection.**



*Bottom rifle, a Model 1873, is the work of one of the Ulrich family, and was a gift from Winchester to Captain Jack Crawford, "The Poet Scout of the Plains," who was a pioneer American gun collector.* **Greg Martin Collection.**

*Inspired by the presentations from Samuel Colt to Czar Nicholas I and the Sultan of Turkey, this set of Third Model Dragoons was embellished by Alvin White for George A. Strichman, Chairman of the Board, Colt Industries. White successfully copied the style of Gustave Young, and in a way improved on the design by using larger scrolls, better suited to the massive size of the revolvers.* **George A. Strichman Collection.**

*Tiffany & Co., Colt jobbers as early as the 1850s, designed and made decorations for Colt, Winchester, and Smith & Wesson firearms in the art nouveau style. The firm is also credited with cast bronze, silver, and gold grips for Colts in the Civil War period. This pair of Colt Single Action Army revolvers was decorated on order of Colt Chairman George A. Strichman, with the design and silver and vermeil grips made by Tiffany & Co., 1984–85. Displayed in Tiffany's New York store, October 1985. The revolvers were the sensation of a retrospective of special commissions done for corporate clients.* **George A. Strichman Collection.**



*This Colt Liberty 100 Buntline is gold inlaid and fitted with sterling silver and gold "Tiffany grips." Engraved by Leonard Francolini, the revolver was made in Connecticut in celebration of the centennial of the statue of Liberty.* **Larry Mayo Collection.**

*(Continued from page 37)*

The American arms industry developed rapidly as a result of demands made by western migration, the Mexican War, and continuous battles with Indians, as well as events in Europe, South Africa, and Australia. At the same time, the Victorian taste for often garish and profuse decoration in art and architecture profoundly influenced weapons embellishment. A golden era of arms decoration quickly evolved; more than 250 gun engravers were active in the United States alone between 1850 and 1914.

Hundreds of Germans and Austrians responded to the American demand for expert gunmakers, most of them settling in New England. The emigrations began in force in the 1840s and 1850s and continued in diminishing quantities into the twentieth century. Several master gun engravers also came to America in the 1840s, among them Louis D. Nimschke, Gustave Young, and the first of the Ulrichs—men who became the most influential style setters and taste makers in the evolution of arms engraving. The Young and Ulrich families became dynasties, with descendants active in the craft well into the twentieth century.

The rich, strongly Germanic style of these engravers still dominates American arms engraving and is popularly called "the American style." Among the better-known examples of this work are a Colt Single Action revolver done for Theodore Roosevelt ("his best Western revolver"), a Model 1876 Winchester presented to General Philip H. Sheridan, gold inlaid Colt percussion revolvers presented to Czar Nicholas I of Russia, equally lavish Colts presented to the Sultan of Turkey and the kings of Sweden and Denmark, and a Remington Rolling Block rifle and Army Model revolver presented to General George Armstrong Custer.

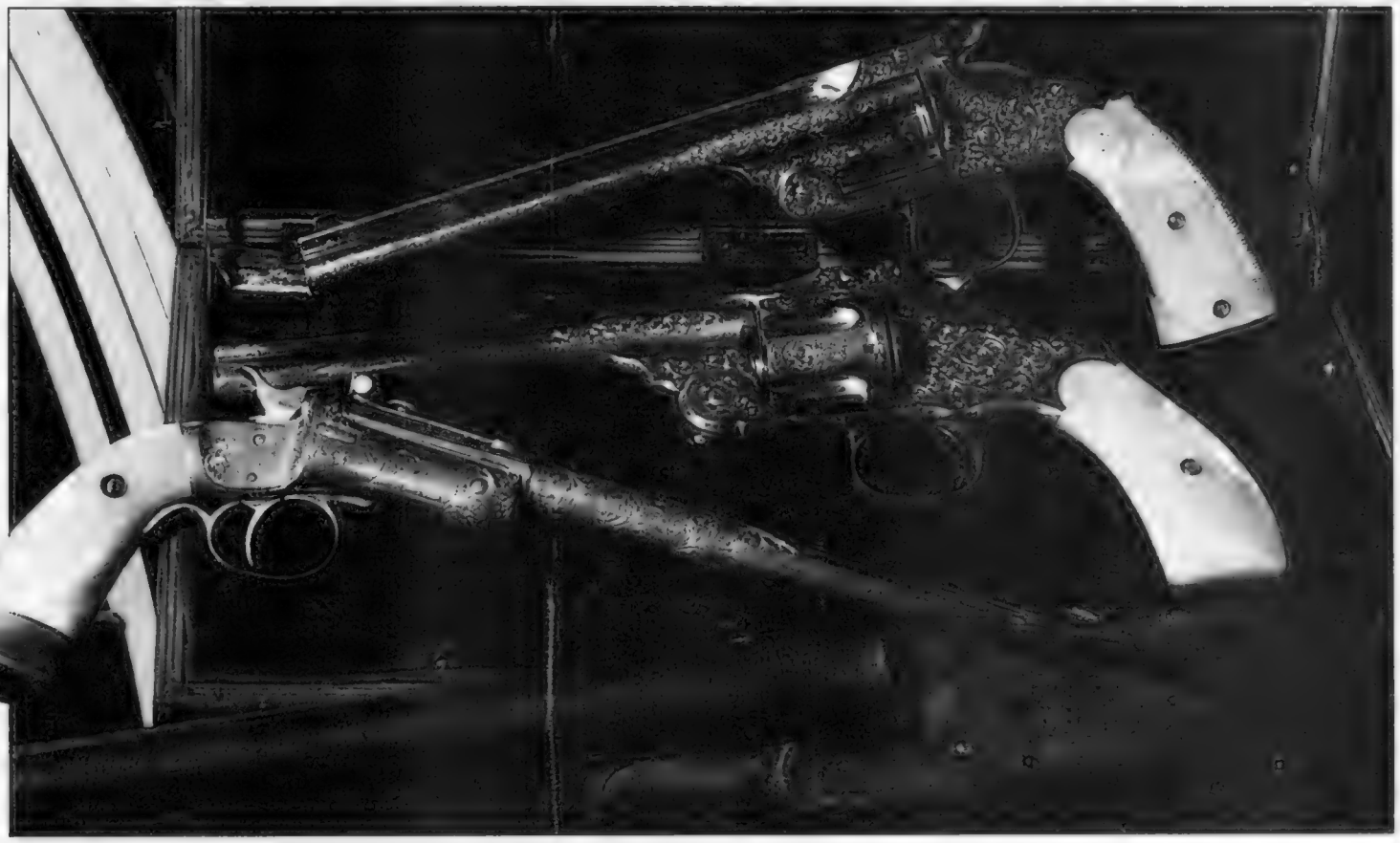
The beginning of the twentieth century saw a decline in the commercial arms trade. Most of the "Wild West" had been tamed, and the great era of big-game hunting was suspended until conservation and game management later restored many species in quantity. World War I interrupted civilian arms production, and, afterward, a shortage of craftsmen plus the ravages of the Depression saw the engraving of arms almost die out. Of equal significance were the advances in metallurgy, producing harder steels, many of them so hard that engraving tools often broke and lines were difficult to cut neatly or with depth. As a consequence, the time required to complete an engraving assignment increased.

PROMINENT DURING THIS PERIOD WERE R. J. KORNBRATH, George Ulrich of Winchester, Wilbur Glahn of Colt's, and Harry Jarvis of Smith & Wesson. Probably not more than twenty persons in America made their living from gun engraving between 1914 and 1945. The most influential was Kornbrath, an Austrian whose reputation has become almost legendary. In general, these engravers held much more closely to the German style than their predecessors had, and American engraved arms from this period differ little from their European counterparts.

A renaissance of interest in engraving began after World War II, which has resulted in a body of craftsmen unequalled in any field—even though one would assume that the best craftsmen would be in the jewelry trade. Many of this new breed were veterans returning from wartime service and looking for intriguing and challenging employment. A renewed interest in shooting sports, a generally favorable economy, and the realization among buyers that quality decorative firearms represent good investments have been strong influences. Furthermore, like the majority of arms collectors, most engravers recognize the field of arms and armor as unique in art and antiques in its extraordinary multi-faceted combination of art and craftsmanship, history, mechanics, and—especially in Western Americana—romance.

The growing number of engravers at work in the United States is a reflection of America's fascination with its firearms heritage. Perhaps 200 Americans now make their living at gun

*Second from the Sturm, Ruger & Co. limited edition of North American big game No. 1 Single Shot Rifles, serial no. 132-65199 honors the Mountain Lion. Engraving and gold inlaying by Franz Marktl, .30-06 caliber. First in the series of twenty-one rifles, it was auctioned by Christie's in New York, October 8, 1985, to benefit the Arms and Armor Department of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, realizing a price of $57,200. The series of rifles was offered at $45,000 and was quickly sold out.* **Courtesy Sturm, Ruger & Co.**



*The three handguns (at top, two Smith & Wessons; at left center, a Stevens tip-up target pistol) were engraved on order of Frank Butler as presents for his wife, Annie Oakley. The gold finish allowed the pistols to glitter in the sun as "Little Miss Sure Shot" performed in an outdoor arena. The L. C. Smith shotgun was embellished by Tiffany & Co. It has Oakley's portrait on the lockplates and her signature in gold on the triggerguard.* **Greg Martin Collection.**

*A gift from the citizens of Rhode Island to General Ulysses S. Grant, in recognition of his Civil War service. The maker of this silver-mounted percussion sporting rifle was N. & N. G. Whitmore. Engraving in a Germanic style, with the classic eagle a featured American detail.* **National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.**

*The simple and time-honored tools of the firearms engraver, basically little changed since the seventeenth century.* **Photo by Zanoni.**

embellishment, and who knows how many hundreds more work as part-time artisans. This new breed employs a wider than ever range of pictorial and scroll themes, heavily influenced by the centuries of gunmaking as well as the ability to share knowledge and technique with each other. A veritable library of books on arms engraving has appeared in the past forty years, and decorated firearms are frequently featured on the covers of gun and shooting periodicals.

While not all those working today are masters, masters do exist, on both sides of the Atlantic. In the opinion of the authors, the finest work on firearms stocking, engraving, metalwork and casing is being done *today*. Among the contemporary giants of gun engraving are K. C. Hunt and the Brown Brothers of England; Hans Obiltschnig of Austria; Wolfgang Tschinkowitz of Germany; Firmo Fracassi, Angelo Galeazzi, Gianfranco Lancini, Francesco Medici, and Gianfranco Pedersoli, all from Gardone Val Trompia, Italy; J. Baerten, René Delcour and his protégé Philippe Grifnee of Belgium; and Mateo e Cayetano and José Careaga of Spain. In the United States are A. A. White, a master of chiselled steel and gold inlay, widely recognized as "dean of American arms engravers"; Lynton S. M. McKenzie, an Australian who came to America via the London arms trade; Frank Hendricks of San Antonio, Leonard Francolini of Connecticut, Sam Alfano of New Orleans, and Winston G. Churchill of Vermont, who was taught engraving by Joseph Fugger of Abercrombie & Fitch's Griffin & Howe, New York, who in turn was a protégé of R. J. Kornbrath.

Alvin A. White, trained in the jewelry industry of his native Attleboro, Massachusetts, and later at the Rhode Island School of Design, was one of the first to respond to the post–World War II demand for high-quality decorated arms. A master not only in steel but in fine metals, ivory, pearl, and wood, White turns his creative genius to scrimshaw, knife making, silver and gold smithing, and inlaid cabinetry as well as gunmaking, stock carving, and engraving.

One of the most important developments in gun engraving occurred in the 1970s, when the Colt Firearms company opened its Custom Gun Shop and concurrently returned black-powder (muzzle-loading) arms to their product line. As a result, some of the finest Colts ever made date from the past fifteen years. Although the Colt black-powder series was discontinued in 1982, the supplier of most of those guns, Aldo Uberti of Gardone Val Trompia, Italy, continues his operation with the gusto of his nineteenth century predecessor, Colonel Samuel Colt. At this writing the finest Colt-style revolver ever built is in the works at Uberti's factory; it is a replica of the Walker model of 1847, gold inlaid to outdo the presentations from the Colonel to Czar Nicholas I in 1854.

The Colt Custom Gun Shop has created modern masterworks now in the collections of kings and presidents and the most discriminating of gun owners. Drawing on a hundred and fifty years of tradition, Colt today offers its entire line of longarms and handguns in custom embellished form. To promote the art of engraving, it regularly creates masterpieces for special occasions and shows; many of these pieces are later sold at auction. Another American manufacturer following in the great tradition of deluxe arms is Sturm, Ruger & Co. The founder and chairman, William B. Ruger, has commissioned a series of deluxe guns of his own make, richly engraved and inlaid by his in-house artist-engraver, Paulus Lantuch. This growing collection, never displayed publicly, represents a body of work that is a salute to the history of arms embellishment.

Firearms have held a unique fascination throughout our history. Richly engraved arms have been, and will continue to be, the most sought after.

**R. L. Wilson** *of Hadlyme, Connecticut, is an internationally respected authority on firearms. He has written many books on that subject and is consultant to a number of institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum, Arms and Armour department.* **Richard Alan Dow** *of Hope, Rhode Island, is a free-lance author with many titles to his credit.*

# RUGER

## Quality Firearms
## 1986

# STURM, RUGER & Company, Inc.

## *"Our direction is towards perfection . . ."*

Today, with so much going on around us we have a tendency to forget about the simple pleasures that can be derived from the hunting and shooting sports, especially as they were enjoyed by the generations that preceded us. Their good fortune was to live in a less complex society, one where hunting to put meat on the table was a way of life. Their society was also one in which the marksman was admired and a county fair wasn't a county fair without an exhibition shooter. Although we cannot recreate those past times we can look to the future of the hunting and shooting sports in the United States optimistically and with great enthusiasm.

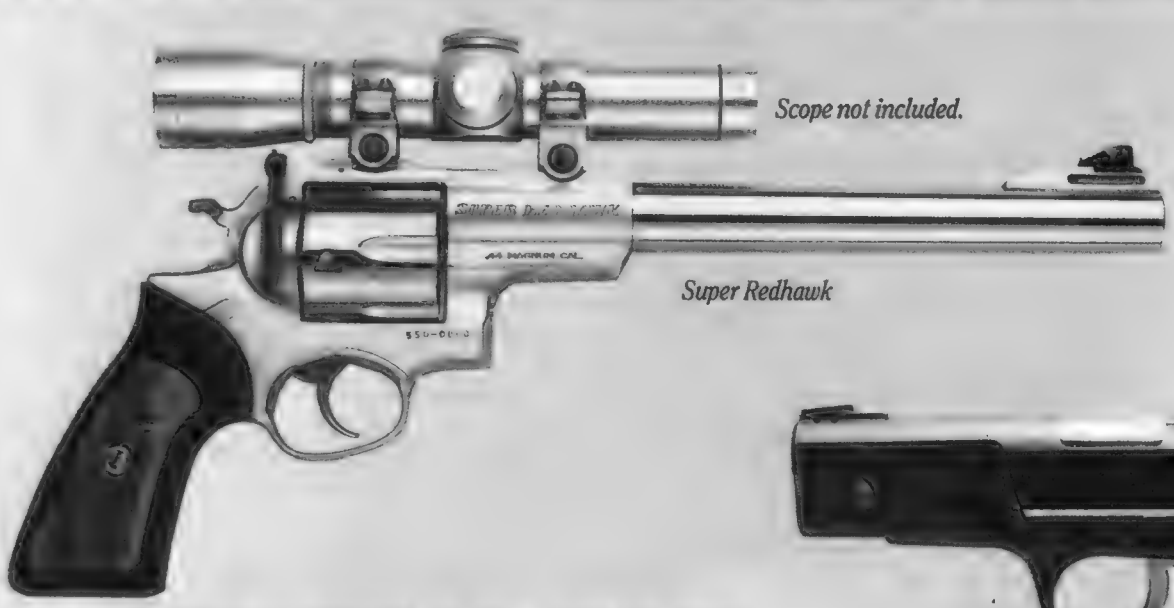
Ruger's basic business has always been the design and production of quality firearms. To assure our customers of a superior product, every firearm manufactured by us is proof tested for strength, durability and fired for accuracy. Literally, millions of rounds of ammunition are fired on Ruger ranges annually in the development and testing of our products.

Any manufacturer who rests on past accomplishments will not survive in the competitive marketplace that exists today. We are striving to improve not only our manufacturing methodology, but also to pass along technological improvements that benefit our customers both in performance and value.

Ruger products are stocked and sold by thousands of retailers in the United States and in many foreign countries. A large percentage of Ruger sporting arms are sold through the specialty gun dealer who provides expertise and "personal service" in the day-to-day business of meeting the requirements of the hunting, shooting and law enforcement communities. To experience the genuine pleasure that comes from handling fine quality Ruger firearms, visit and support your independent stocking gun dealer.

William B. Ruger

## RUGER® NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT



*Scope not included.*

*Super Redhawk*

*P-85 Semi-Automatic Pistol*

### RUGER SUPER REDHAWK™ REVOLVER AND P-85™ AUTOMATIC PISTOL

Ruger has introduced over twenty new products or product improvements in the last two decades. In addition there are several new guns in various stages of development — two of which are planned for introduction in late 1986.

These exciting new handguns are the large frame Super Redhawk double-action revolver chambered for the .44 Magnum cartridge and the Ruger P-85, 9mm double-action automatic pistol. The company's objective is to continue to introduce new products to meet the ever-changing needs of the hunting and shooting public.

# RUGER GP-100™ NEW DOUBLE-ACTION REVOLVER

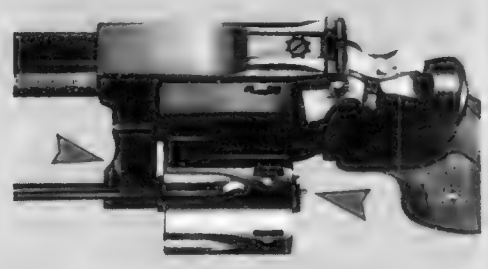
## NEW
## RUGER GP-100™
### Double-Action Revolver
### Cal. .357 Magnum

Designed as the ultimate .357 Magnum for police and personal defense use, the new GP-100 incorporates a number of important new features and improvements (patents pending), and offers a greater degree of accuracy, strength, reliability, and effectiveness than ever before realized in any double-action revolver.

The unique GP-100 design includes a heavy, solid frame, rugged .357 Magnum cylinder, and cushioned grip panels which are anatomically designed to fit the hands of the majority of shooters. The interchangeable front sight system allows the installation of sights of various styles, heights and colors. A full length ejector rod shroud helps to achieve the slight muzzle-heavy balance considered desirable for rapid double-action firing. Barrels are constructed with a wide top rib, longitudinally serrated to present a glare-free surface.

The GP-100 revolver serves eminently to confirm Ruger leadership in modern firearms design and manufacture.

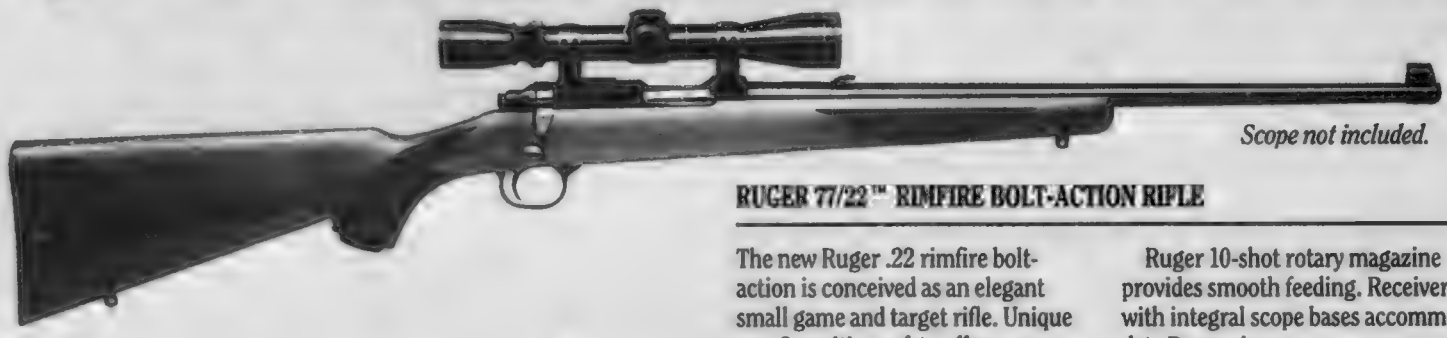
The grip portion of the Ruger GP-100 revolver unlike the conventional skeleton type grip frame has been designed to incorporate a variety of functions. It houses the mainspring seat, trigger guard latch, and grip panel locator. The design of this unique frame extension also permits the installation of customized wrap-around grip panels in a variety of shapes and sizes to suit the tastes of the individual owner.



The Ruger cylinder locking system represents a successful mechanical engineering solution to the problem of positive cylinder locking. The Ruger cylinder is locked to the frame by a strong pilot bearing at the rear of the cylinder, and by a sturdy locking bolt at the front of the crane which engages a matching slot at the front of the frame.

The Ruger concept of integral subassemblies and simple takedown has been proven in previous Ruger designs, and is now brought to perfection. The Ruger GP-100 revolver can be field-stripped to its basic subassemblies in a matter of seconds, without the use of special tools allowing the user to clean and maintain the revolver in the field quickly and with great ease.

# RUGER® THE NAME



*Scope not included.*

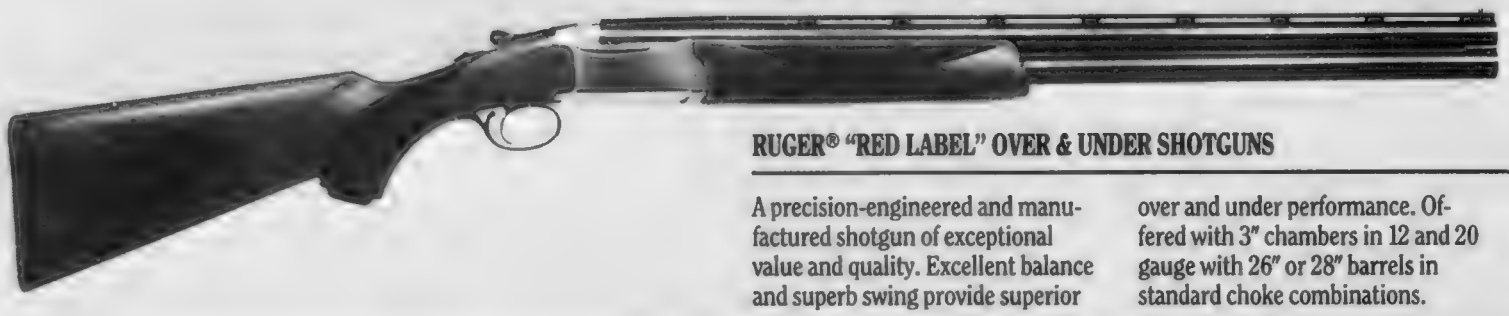
## RUGER 77/22™ RIMFIRE BOLT-ACTION RIFLE

The new Ruger .22 rimfire bolt-action is conceived as an elegant small game and target rifle. Unique new 3-position safety offers a new dimension in security.

Ruger 10-shot rotary magazine provides smooth feeding. Receiver with integral scope bases accommodate Ruger rings.

## RUGER 10/22® AUTOLOADING CARBINE

The Ruger 10/22 offers lightweight, short overall length, and mechanical dependability. A 10-shot rotary magazine handles .22 rimfire cartridges. The reliable Ruger 10/22 is an excellent choice for small game hunters, target practice or beginning shooters. Standard model or Deluxe Sporter offered.



## RUGER® "RED LABEL" OVER & UNDER SHOTGUNS

A precision-engineered and manufactured shotgun of exceptional value and quality. Excellent balance and superb swing provide superior over and under performance. Offered with 3" chambers in 12 and 20 gauge with 26" or 28" barrels in standard choke combinations.

## RUGER® BISLEY SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVERS

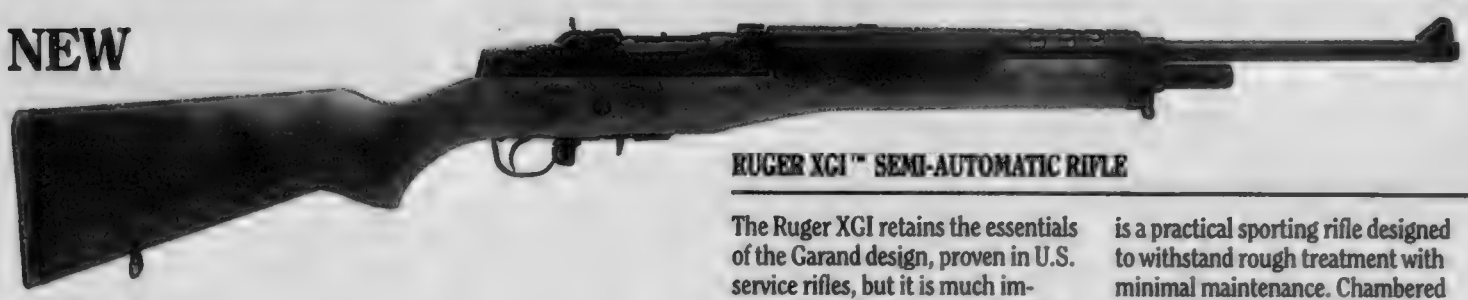
The first Bisleys were used by competitive target shooters at the British National Rifle Association matches held in Bisley, England in the 1890's. The Ruger Bisleys are offered in two frame sizes chambered for a variety of handgun cartridges and with or without fluted cylinders and roll engraving.

## RUGER OLD ARMY® CAP AND BALL REVOLVER

Experienced muzzle loading shooters who have tested and used the Ruger Old Army revolver have been lavish in their praise of this fine cap and ball handgun, one of the finest percussion revolvers ever made. Available in blued finish or corrosion resistant stainless steel. Caliber: .44 Bore.

# STANDS FOR QUALITY

**NEW**



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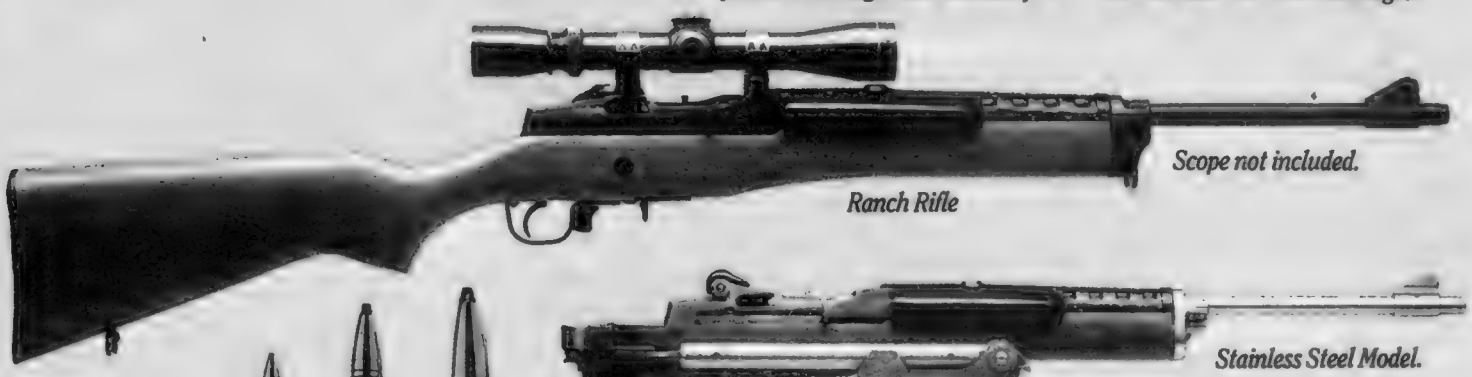

*Scope not included.*

*Ranch Rifle*

*Stainless Steel Model.*

*Mini-14*

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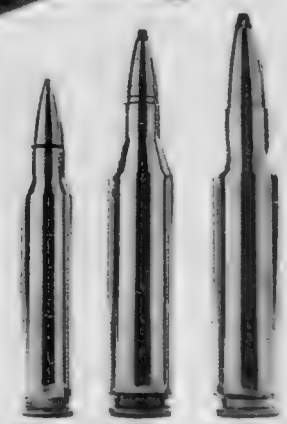
*The Ruger semi-automatic rifles are chambered for world-famous hunting cartridges.*



.223 Rem. .243 Win. .308 Win.

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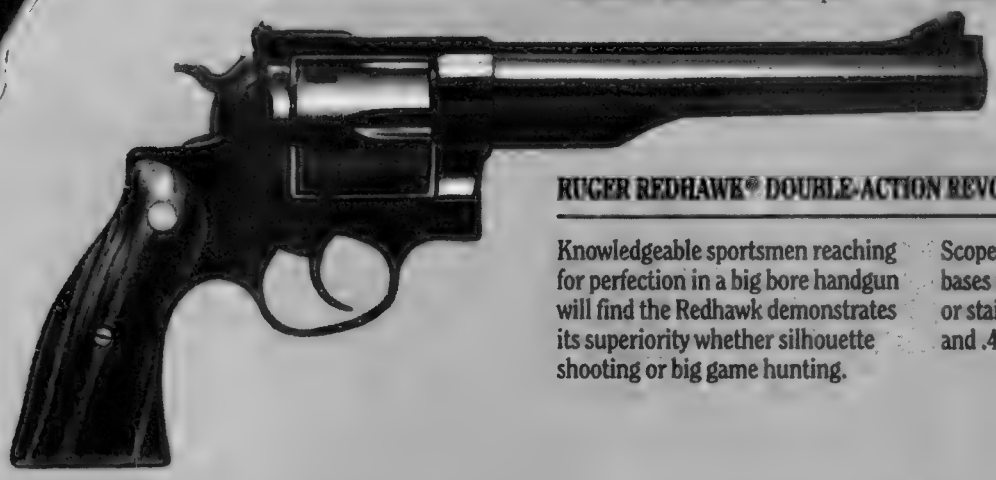

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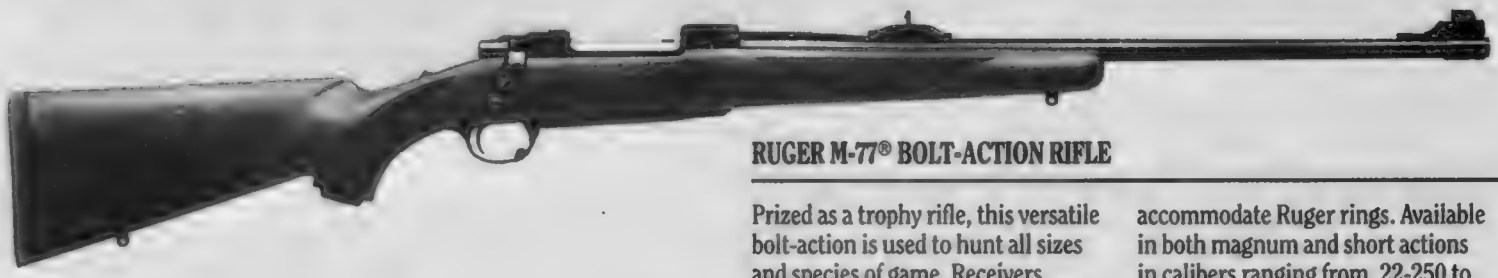

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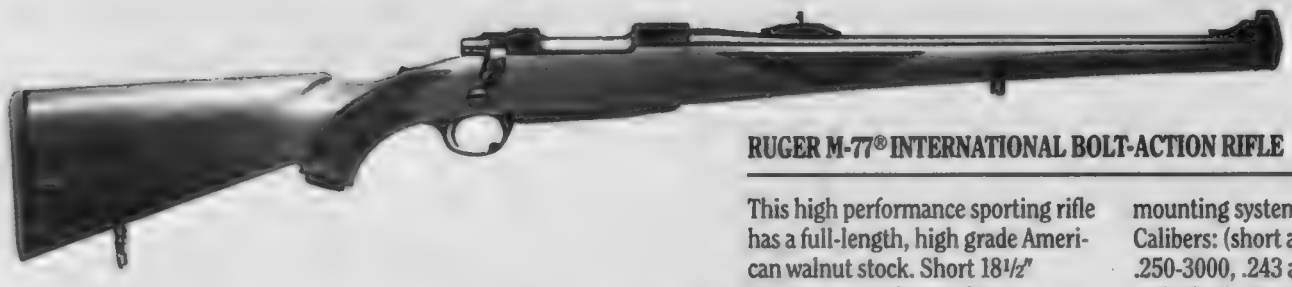
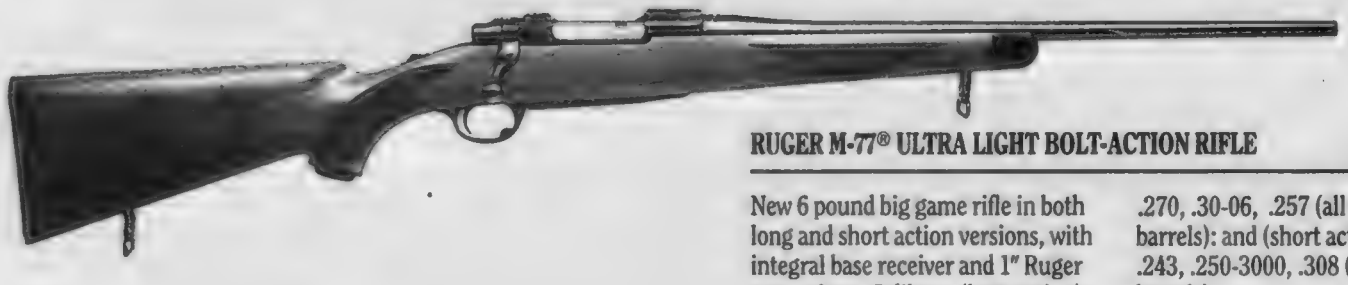


## RUGER M-77® INTERNATIONAL BOLT-ACTION RIFLE

This high performance sporting rifle has a full-length, high grade American walnut stock. Short 18½" barrel, open sights, and Ruger scope mounting system are features. Calibers: (short action) .22-250, .250-3000, .243 and .308 Win., (long action) .30-06, .270.



## RUGER M-77® ULTRA LIGHT BOLT-ACTION RIFLE

New 6 pound big game rifle in both long and short action versions, with integral base receiver and 1" Ruger scope rings. Calibers: (long action) .270, .30-06, .257 (all with 20" barrels): and (short action) .22-250, .243, .250-3000, .308 (all with 20" barrels).

*Super Single-Six*

*Single-Six .32 H&R*

## RUGER SUPER SINGLE-SIX® & SINGLE-SIX® .32 H&R REVOLVERS

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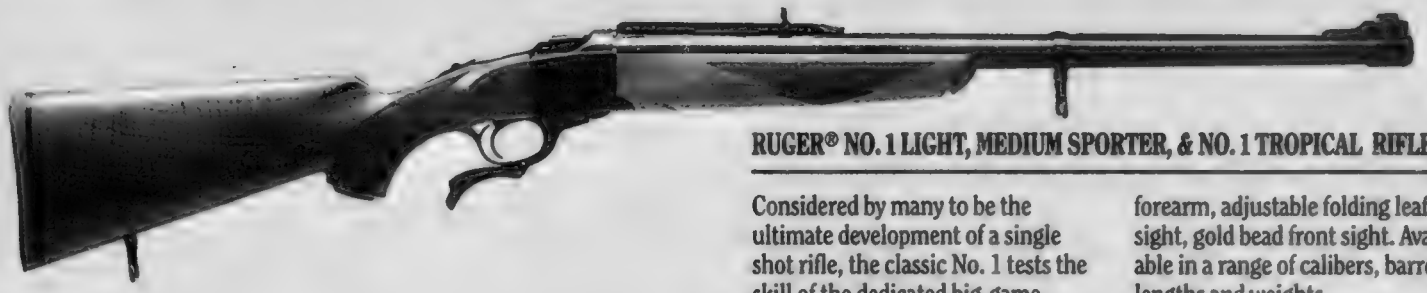
# NUMBER 1 GUN MAKER



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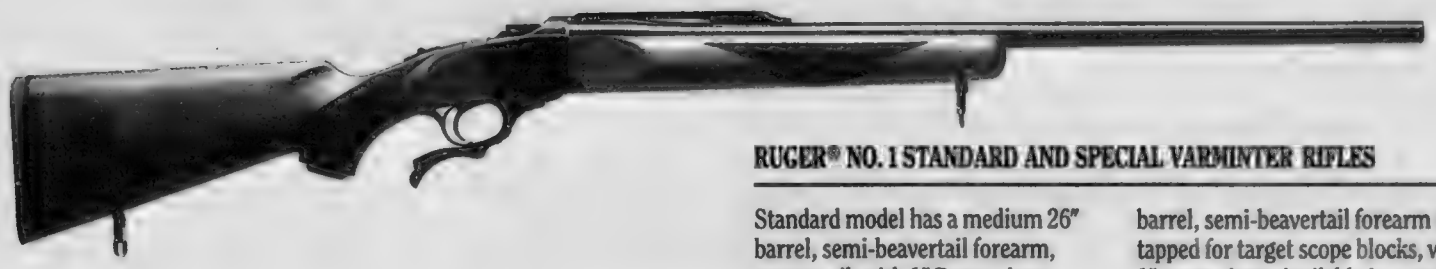

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Standard model has a medium 26" barrel, semi-beavertail forearm, quarter rib with 1" Ruger rings. Varmint model with heavy 24" barrel, semi-beavertail forearm is tapped for target scope blocks, with 1" scope rings. Available in a variety of sporting and varmint calibers.

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*Blackhawk*

*Super Blackhawk*

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*Security-Six*

*New Goncalo Alves grips.*

*Service-Six*

*Stainless steel model.*
*New Goncalo Alves grips.*

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# AMERICAN WEST – PENTAX 1986

# CELEBRATE - THE - WEST

## PHOTO CONTEST

*1986 GRAND PRIZE: PENTAX 645 Camera, 80–160 Zoom Lens, 120-Film Back. Retail value is $2,500.*

*1985 Grand Prize Winner by Sheila Lee of Yorba Linda, California*

## FOURTH ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST

Two thousand five hundred dollars worth of PENTAX 645 camera equipment will be awarded to the winner of AMERICAN WEST's Fourth Annual Celebrate-the-West Photo Contest. Photographs of Western people, places, still lifes, and events are all eligible in an open-class photo contest. Photos will be judged by a panel comprised of the editor and art director of AMERICAN WEST in conjunction with a distinguished outside professional photographer. Photos will be evaluated on originality, quality, and technique.

In addition to the Grand Prize provided by PENTAX in the Fourth Annual Photo Contest, four additional prizes of $100 each will be awarded. Winning photographs will appear in the January/February 1987 issue of AMERICAN WEST.

**Deadline for entries is September 15, 1986.** Read the Contest Rules and get your entries in early.

### CONTEST RULES

**ELIGIBILITY**

The contest is open to everyone except employees of AMERICAN WEST and their relatives. Previously published photos or ones pending publication will not qualify. All entries must be available to the magazine for use on a first-right basis.

**ENTRIES**

You may submit any number of photographs on a Western subject, which will be judged on originality and quality. Be sure to enclose the official entry form (or a 3" x 5" facsimile) with your name, address, telephone number, and total number of photographs entered. There is no entry fee. AMERICAN WEST acquires the right to publish and use for exhibit or promotion all winning photographs.

Photographs may be either black and white or color and are not to exceed 8" x 10" in size. All entries will be judged together. Please do NOT send slides. Do NOT send photos mounted in glass. If your color photograph is judged a winner, you will need to provide AMERICAN WEST with a color transparency.

Each entry must be clearly marked on the back with the name, address, and telephone number of the photographer, the place the photo was taken, and the type of camera and film used, along with any special lenses, equipment, or techniques. Model releases must accompany all photos that include identifiable people.

**LIABILITY**

A stamped, self-addressed envelope of sufficient size must accompany your entries for their return. Include cardboard to protect your photos. AMERICAN WEST is not responsible for materials lost or damaged in the mail.

**DEADLINE**

Your entry must be postmarked by midnight of September 15, 1986. Late entries will be returned unopened. Send to: AMERICAN WEST Photo Contest, 3033 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719.

### PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST
Official Entry

Name _____

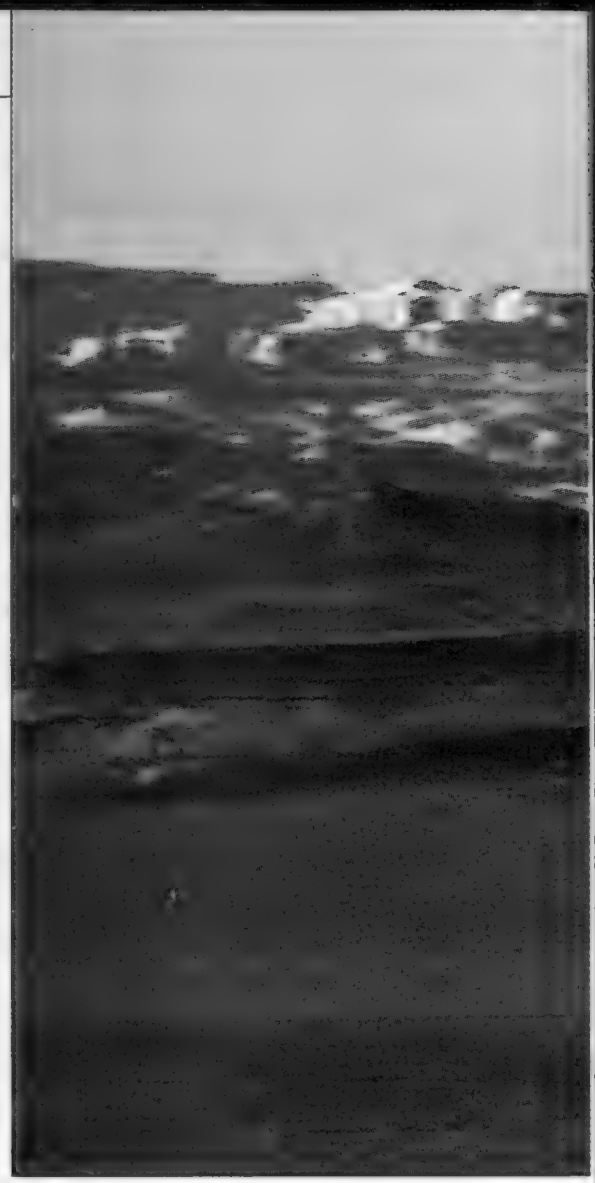
Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Number of entries _____

Please read the Contest Rules carefully.



*This desert mirage was photographed from a small plane flying at about 5,000 feet above the Carson Sink area near Fallon, Nevada, in January 1982, at about 4:30 P.M. Photographer Bargen points out that none of the unusual effects was caused by cloud layers. The mesa-topped structures in the background do not exist in reality.*

# PHANTASMAGORIC VISIONS LURED PIONEERS

## Mirages fooled travelers on Western plains

**by Sally Zanjani**

UPON ONE OCCASION I MET A YOUNG OFFICER WHO HAD spent several years on the Plains and in the Indian country,'' wrote George Armstrong Custer in *My Life on the Plains* (1874).

> He was [continued Custer], on the occasion alluded to, in command of a detachment of cavalry in pursuit of a party of Indians who had been committing depredations on our frontier. While riding at the head of his command he suddenly discovered, as he thought, a party of Indians not more than a mile distant. The latter seemed to be galloping toward him. . . . The trot was sounded, and the column moved forward to the attack. The distance between the attacking party and the supposed foe was rapidly diminishing, the Indians appearing plainer to view each moment. The charge was about to be sounded, when it was discovered that the supposed party of Indians consisted of the decayed carcasses of half a dozen slain buffaloes, which number had been magnified by the mirage, while the peculiar motion imparted by the latter had given the appearance of Indians on horseback.

The vision that these cavalrymen so nearly charged was a particularly vivid example of a phenomenon often seen on the hot plains and deserts of the West. Some pioneers observed ships skimming across the sands under full sail. Others reported mirages of large herds of buffalo and antelope. During a journey through the Colorado desert, J. Ross Browne saw a mirage railroad track elevated on pilings and also marveled at the flocks of water birds with brilliant plumage that he glimpsed beside a silvery lake in the same vision, insisting that he had ''but faintly pictured'' the wonders of a mirage. While crossing the Great Salt Desert with the Harlan-Young wagon train, Heinrich Lienhard observed an extraordinary creature—a great, black sea serpent writhing through the waters of a phantom lake. Closer inspection revealed that the apparition was actually a party of men with oxen, mules, and horses trailing across the desert.

Sometimes, like the cavalry detachment on the plains, Western travelers encountered a phantom army. In the wake of an afternoon sandstorm on the Great Salt Desert in 1846, Edwin Bryant saw a party of horsemen and marching figures apparently rushing down upon his company of immigrants through the ''dreary and heaven-condemned waste.'' Although seemingly three to five miles away, they appeared as large as the men at his side, and he could see their faces. At first, Bryant guessed they were Indians; then, when the advancing figures multiplied before his eyes into an army of three or four hundred, he conjectured that this must be the Frémont party returning to the states. He asked one of his companions whether he, too, saw the advancing host and was assured that he not only saw it but had already seen several such armies

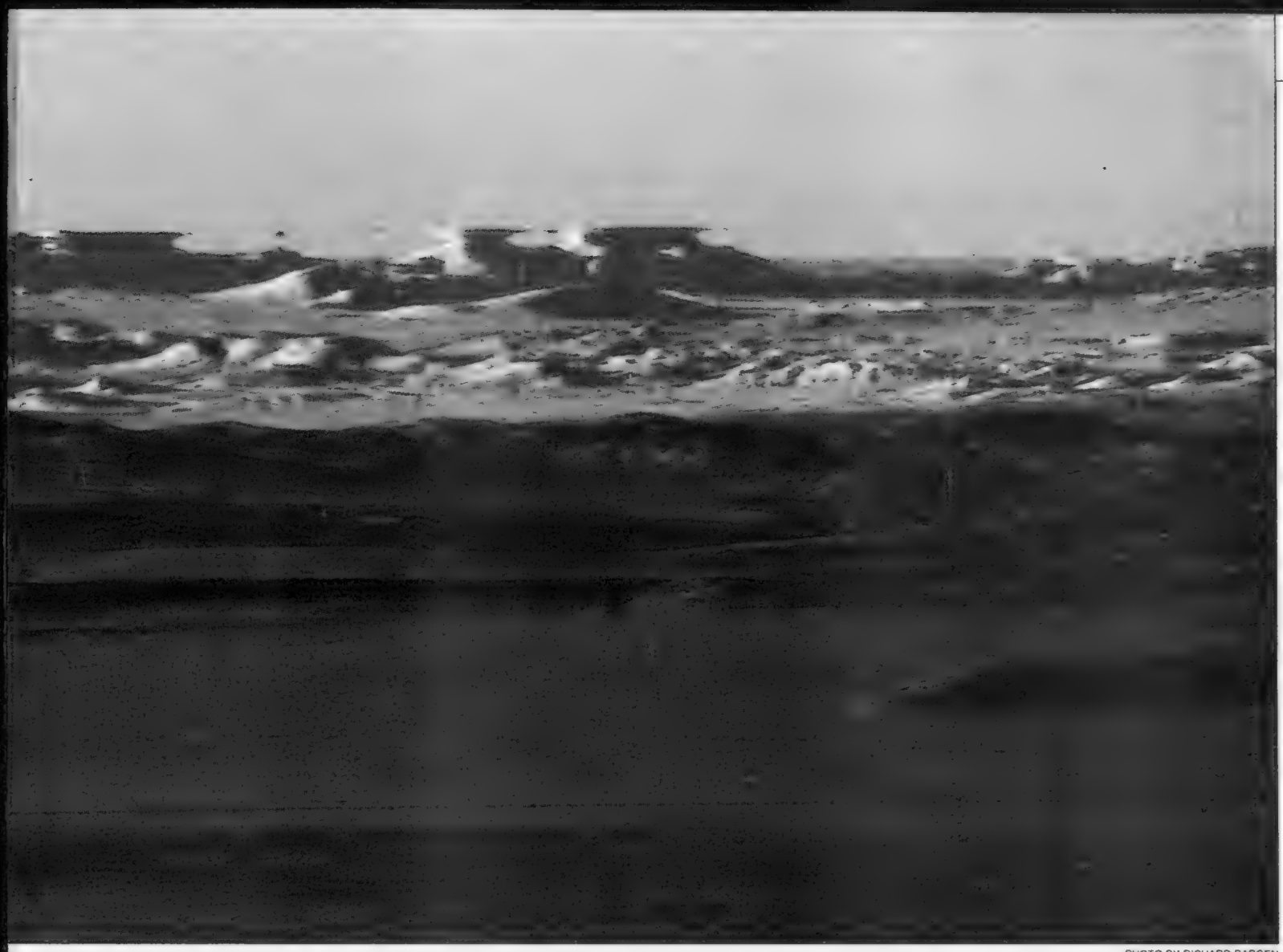


PHOTO BY RICHARD BARGEN

appear and disappear. Realizing that the giant army was an illusion, Bryant endeavored to explain it in scientific terms. (For numerous Western travelers these speculations were an engrossing pastime that Custer tells us had served to while away "many a weary mile" on the plains.) At the same time, Bryant admitted that his reactions to the mirage were not entirely rational: "This phantom population, springing out of the ground as it were . . . excited those superstitious emotions so natural to all mankind."

THESE WONDROUS ILLUSIONS ON THE WESTERN PLAINS occur when light rays are bent as they pass through atmosphere with an abnormal distribution of air density. The most common mirage, a false pond on an asphalt highway, occurs because the air near the road is much warmer and less dense than the air above. This produces a refracted image of the sky, called an inferior mirage because the bent light rays enter the observer's eye below the line of sight and the image is beneath the actual object. The opposite atmospheric situation, a layer of cold air trapped next to the surface and an equally sharp change in air density, is the source of the superior mirage common in Alaska and the polar regions. Here the bent light rays reach the observer above the line of sight and the image appears above the actual object. Ordinarily, visibility is limited by the curvature of the earth, but in the well-known Novaya Zemlya effect the bent rays can elevate into the range of vision the image of an object that actually lies below the horizon. This effect is named for the experience of a stranded party of Arctic explorers who, through the medium of a mirage, saw the sun rise two weeks before the long Northern night really ended.

More complicated stratification in air density can give rise to a multiplication of magnified, diminished, reversed, upright, and distorted images. Apparent movement of these images, like the charging Indians of Custer's story, is known as "shimmering" and is the result of minor irregularities in the temperature and density of air stirred by turbulence. It is by no means uncommon for a mirage to transform mundane objects into phantasmagoric visions, bearing no resemblance to the source. At the same time, mirages are also capable of reproducing a faraway object with amazing fidelity because light rays oscillate around the earth from a great distance like radio waves and periodically focus an image. An ocean mirage of identifiable landmarks 335 to 350 miles away in Iceland has been recorded. However, until the maximum distance that can separate a mirage from its source is established, skepticism will surround the claim of Alaska sourdoughs who insisted that the mirage city miraculously hovering in the desert near Goldfield, Nevada, was one they had known well on the Klondike.

Aside from the image of glittering water, probably the most common Western mirage is a lake fringed with shady, inviting

*These two photographs were taken within a minute or two before the one on the preceding page. They illustrate the variations in a mirage that take place through changes in altitude of the plane carrying the observer. Photographer Bargen says the fantastic changes that occur alter all familiar mountains to such an extent that without navigational aides, the pilot would become lost. He speaks enthusiastically about the spectacular show that mirages provide the airplane passenger in this region at this altitude. "I have seen the region around Fallon transformed into vistas such as I know do not exist on this earth."*

PHOTOS BY RICHARD BARGEN

green trees. Multiple images can produce a vision of an enchanted city amidst the greenery beside the lake. This mirage, which has been called the rarest and most sophisticated on earth, is the "fata morgana." Often seen over the Strait of Messina between Sicily and the toe of the Italian boot, it was named for the sorceress Morgan Le Fay and has long been known to travelers in the American West. The same Edwin Bryant who saw a phantom army on the Great Salt Desert in 1846 also described a fata morgana that he observed through the fine dust that surrounded him like a dense fog.

> Lakes, dotted with islands and bordered by groves of gently waving timber, whose tranquil and limpid waves reflected their sloping banks and the shady islets in their bosoms, lay spread out before us, inviting us, by their illusory temptations, to stray from our path and enjoy their cooling shades and refreshing waters. These fading away as we advanced, beautiful villas, adorned with edifices, decorated with all the ornaments of suburban architecture, and surrounded by gardens, shaded walks, parks, and stately avenues, would succeed them, renewing the alluring invitation to repose, by enticing the vision with more than Calypsan enjoyments or Elysian pleasures. . . . The whole distant view around, at this point, seemed like the creations of a sublime and gorgeous dream, or the effect of enchantment.

Most Western sightings occurred in summer, as might be expected, with locations ranging widely over the flat, hot, evenly lighted plains and deserts. Weather and time of day were infrequently mentioned in written accounts. Though prairie mirages have become more rare since cultivation of the

soil altered conditions, some localities, like the Great Salt Desert, remain especially subject to mirages. Old-timers say that when you have lived on the desert long enough, you learn when the light is right for seeing a mirage.

A QUIET, ENCLOSED BODY OF WATER SUCH AS PUGET Sound is also perfect for mirages under a variety of weather conditions. Often the water stays relatively warm while the surrounding land cools off during the night. When cool air flowing out from the land in the morning is warmed by the water beneath, a temperature profile like that above a hot asphalt road is created, and an inferior mirage may be seen. By contrast, on a sunny afternoon a flow of air (warmed by the land) over a body of water that cools it from beneath means that air temperature increases with height and the strongest temperature gradient is down near the surface of the water. Now a superior mirage is possible. Lake mirages are common, also, in extremely cold weather. David Thompson, an early explorer and surveyor, wrote of repeated sightings over the lakes of western Canada in late February and March around midmorning during clear weather and calm or light winds, with the temperature hovering around ten or twelve degrees below zero.

Since Thompson, scientists have learned more about the atmospheric conditions particularly conducive to mirages. During observations at Puget Sound, meteorologist Alistair Fraser and his associate William Mach have found that the fata morgana is often associated with a cool layer of air near the ground and an illusory fog that gentle winds and slight undulations in the atmosphere shape into strange forms. These conditions were evidently present in Nevada in January 1861 when for several mornings a vision of a city, with castles, towers, and battlements, beside a rocky sea coast emerged from the mist over the Humboldt Sink. A local newspaper remarked that the panorama was considered preferable to a magic-lantern show in one important respect: "We did not have to pay our dollar for a sight."

Today such sights can be predicted as well as explained. Working on the Novaya Zemlya effect, W. B. Lehn and B. German of the University of Manitoba have developed computer models to calculate the temperature gradients that cause mirages and to predict the kinds of images that will appear. A mirage is visible to everyone present, though variations in perception may occur when the image is an indistinct one. Then, observers will tend to interpret it in terms of what they expect to see—one reason that Indian warriors and herds of buffalo are no longer reported.

Some observers have questioned whether it is really possible to be deceived by a mirage, and it is certainly true that the obvious inversions and fantastic creations are unlikely to hoodwink anyone. As one skeptic has pointed out, it is difficult to be fooled by an upside down antelope forty feet high. Mirages that disappear from one spot and reappear in another are similarly unlikely to deceive. Moreover, because false pond mirages depend on the height of the observer's eye, they can be identified by a simple test. When the observer kneels, distant illusions vanish as the field of vision is shortened, but real ponds and their reflections remain.

Nonetheless, there is considerable evidence that mirages did delude some Western travelers. In *Commerce of the Prairies* (1844) Josiah Gregg, a Santa Fe trader, wrote:

> Even the experienced traveler is often deceived by these [false ponds] upon the arid plains, where a disappointment is most severely felt. The thirsty wayfarer, after jogging for hours under a burning sky, at length espies a pond—yes, it must be water—it looks too natural for him to be mistaken. He quickens his pace, enjoying in anticipation the pleasure of a refreshing draught: but lo! as he approaches, it recedes or entirely disappears; and when upon its apparent site, he is ready to doubt his own vision—he finds but a parched plain under his feet. It is not until he has been thus a dozen times deceived, that he is willing to relinquish the pursuit.

CUSTER RECALLED THAT THROUGHOUT THE PLAINS HE had seen scattered graves of travelers who had succumbed to thirst after being led astray from established trails by mirages. Perhaps the strongest testament to the deceptive power of the mirage came from a creature a good deal less credulous than the average gold seeker—his horse. During an unsuccessful attempt in 1864 to reach the Montana goldfields by a new route through Dakota Territory, Van H. Fisk reported seeing a mirage lake so real that the wagon train's horses whinnied at the sight.

Occasionally travelers were so often deceived by mirages that they began to ignore reality. Santa Fe trader Gregg recounted that after repeated deceptions, travelers on the Santa Fe Trail sometimes bypassed a real pond "for fear of another disappointment." While walking north from Mexico through the Arizona desert, prospector Frank ("Shorty") Harris nearly lost his life through one of these misinterpretations of reality. Harris said he survived for five days on drops of juice from a bulbous desert plant before reaching water. After his water again ran out, he saw an aged, mangy camel drinking at a pool. Convinced that the creature must be a bizarre mirage, he tottered onward in search of a spring until he collapsed. Fortunately, he was rescued by a passing traveler, whom he told of having lost his mind and imagining that he had seen an incredible mirage of a camel at a pond. "You damned fool," said his rescuer brusquely. "It *was* a camel and you saw water." He went on to inform Harris that a few camels turned loose after freighting operations continued to roam the desert. The reaction of the notoriously ill-tempered Harris to this piece of news is best left to the imagination.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

Additional sources include "Mirages" by Alistair B. Fraser and William H. Mach in *Scientific American*, 234 (January 1976), *Salt Desert Trails* by Charles Kelly (1969), and *Loafing along Death Valley Trails* by William Caruthers (1951).

**Sally Zanjani** *is coauthor of* The Ignoble Conspiracy: Radicalism on Trial in Nevada, *a new release from University of Nevada Press. Dr. Zanjani has contributed to* AMERICAN WEST *over a number of years.*

# A Lonely Desert Rendezvous

# Solitary pilgrimage to a personal shrine

**by Doug Peacock**

*Under a pale December sky the Arizona desert stretches across coarse sands and hardy plants to mountains in the distance. A solitary walker like our author Doug Peacock* (inset) *courts tragedy unless he knows his way. To Peacock, the enigmatic desert is beautiful and fragile as well as treacherous and offers the opportunity for self-testing and reverent homage to earlier wayfarers.*

THE GREYHOUND BUS SLOWS AND COMES TO A STOP AT the fork of an off-ramp. We're in the middle of nowhere in Arizona's southwestern desert, and the interstate is quiet and lonely. The driver says, "Here?" and I nod. He opens the door, and I follow him out. He pulls my big backpack out of the baggage compartment, watches incredulously as I shoulder it, then closes up and gets back in the bus. As I go up the ramp to the overpass, I can see him start up, shaking his head as he takes off for San Diego, leaving me alone.

At the head of the ramp, I cross above the interstate and descend on the other side, looking south toward my destination. The dark, shimmering, empty land lies as far as my eye can see—broad creosote valleys broken by distant, hazy ranges and volcanic hills, a harsh, lunar-like landscape lit by a blue December sky. I tie my three, one-gallon canteens to the frame of my pack, climb the interstate fence, and start into the greasewood desert.

Hours later, I step into the thin shade of a saguaro cactus and wipe the sweat from my forehead. To the south a massive mountain system dominated by several dark peaks rises out of the desert floor. With luck I'll reach the nearest water, at the northern end of the range, by tomorrow evening. Two days later, I should arrive on the eastern fringe of those mountains where I have a ceremony to perform. I am returning to this isolated place to be alone, to try myself once again, and to conclude some unfinished personal business. Then I've got to hike out. It will be ten days before I cross a road or see another human.

The problem is water; out here, there isn't much of it, and one has to know where it is. Most of the water is found in shaded canyons in *tinajas,* natural water-holding basins drilled into rocks by torrential summer rains. Their location and spacing, sometimes thirty or more miles apart, will determine my route and the amount of water I have to carry between them.

I trudge off again, toward Mexico, fifty miles distant, walking over shallow sand washes lined with paloverde, clumps of bur sage, and low thickets of spiney Christmas cholla, decked out in December with tiny red buds. A pair of huge red mule ears sticks up from a patch of dry winter grass. The ears of the jackrabbit are translucent, backlit by the afternoon sun, a roadmap of blue veins. I give the hare my best coyote bark, and it bounces through the creosote.

Near evening, I stop to watch the fading light, the crimson glow outlining another big mountain range far to the southwest. A cool breeze drifts across the playa; night and day temperatures can vary forty degrees this time of year. I dig a down jacket out of my backpack, put it on over my sweat-soaked tee-shirt, sit back, and listen to the wind blowing out of Mexico. I hear the background ringing of my own ears; outside, the quiet is complete, finally broken by the cry of a distant coyote.

No one except a few prospectors and bands of Indians has ever lived here. Part of the region has the mixed blessing of being used as an Air Force gunnery range. Mixed because, despite the occasional litter of jettisoned 50-caliber linkage and the drone of aircraft on the days they fly, the military has prohibited other human activity such as mining and livestock grazing.

This stretch of desert has a bad reputation as one of the driest, hottest, and most formidable places on the continent; its sands have claimed more than a few lives. Yet people have traveled these Arizona mountains and playas for centuries. Ancient Yuman Indians wandered through, carrying their priceless water in fire-hardened clay ollas. Nearly a thousand years ago, the Hohokam trekked south from their Gila River homes along this route, down to the Sea of Cortez. They returned under staggering loads of valued Glycymeris and Cardium shells, which they carved into earrings, bracelets, and (a couple of hundred years before the Hohokam disappeared forever) effigies of frogs.

LATER, THE SPANIARDS CAME, THE FIRST OF A LONG LINE of mostly wretched white visitors to the area. Melchior Díaz crossed, going west to California in 1540, dying of an old wound in Caborca a few weeks after his return trip. Other Spaniards and Mexicans used his route, leaving their dead buried in shallow graves that still line the fearsome old trail from Sonoita to Yuma known as the Devil's Highway.

The Americans came, driven by dreams of California gold, beginning in 1849 and lasting through the early fifties. Hurriedly organized and poorly equipped along the Texas frontier, they hadn't a clue to what was waiting for them in the desert. They might have been on Mars. Nobody knows how many died here, but some put the number in the hundreds, others in the thousands. Another surge of gold seekers, mostly from Mexico, swept through five years later, and again the loss of life was heavy.

During all my walks here, I have never seen a soul, nothing but a few thin bootprints of illegal aliens heading north. There is nothing out here. Lots of nothing. No people for sixty or more miles in any direction. Nothing but rocks and plants, birds and rabbits, snakes and lizards, sheep and coyotes, and an occasional mountain lion living off a rare deer or javelina. This is my seventh walk across these formidable hills. This year I have a mission, to leave an offering at the edge of those mountains with the dark peaks.

I wait in the night blackness for an hour, then watch the nearly full moon rise out of the eastern mountains. Straining under the big backpack, I continue southward looking for a wash in which to camp. I avoid the occasional cholla cactus and trust my feet to find their way.

The moon is high in the eastern sky as I reach the dark shadow of a large wash. Exhausted, I throw my sleeping bag under a huge ironwood tree and kindle a small fire into which I stare until I fall asleep.

I wake with the sun shining on the top of the ironwood tree. Bushtits flit in the parasitic mistletoe. I pack up and climb out of the wash onto the alluvial bench. To the south, the jagged peaks loom in the morning sky. The first water, a place called Stag Tank, lies near the northern edge of those mountains, about ten miles distant.

The sun passes its zenith and begins its descent into the

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

**I won't cross a road or see anyone for ten days. If I break a leg, I'm stuck.**

***Wide, deep cracks in the desert floor show the effect of water, wind, and heat and form a dramatic design that warns the traveler of the power of the desert's elements.***

west. The heat of the midwinter day feels good on my aching muscles. I have reached a reef of rock apart from the mountains. Stag Tank is only a couple of miles away. I stash my pack and walk up into the canyon where the tank lies. In the sky a great dark bird disappears over the ridge just as I bring my glasses on it. I could have sworn it was a golden eagle, though I have never seen one out here. My shoulders and hips feel much better without the pack, but my feet are still sore. I take a handful of aspirin and walk on. The aches and pains are part of the trip.

Stag Tank is covered by a green slime of algae coated with a carpet of dead moths, bees, and feathers. Still, its water is sweet. I sweep the surface free of slime and bugs and fill my canteen with cool water and squirming larvae, more protein for the trip. One shouldn't complain about the quality of water out here. You take what you can get. A man called Pompelly, who traveled this country around the turn of the century, griped about the water at Tule Well, which he found offensive and brackish. Later, he ran into a friend who had been over the same route.

"How did you like the Tule Well water?" the friend asked.

"Not much," Pompelly answered.

"Naturally," the friend said, "for we found and left a man in it two years ago."

I fill the last of my canteens with Stag Tank water and return down the canyon to my pack. I want to keep moving. It is about twenty miles to the next water. My route across these basins and ranges follows no roads, but crosses valleys and passes on faint game trails on which no human has set foot for centuries. If I break a leg, I'm stuck. I have a signal mirror for flashing a passing airplane, though it could be weeks before one flies by close enough to signal.

THE DAY TURNS INTO EVENING—IT IS WARM, UNUSUally warm for this time of year. I watch the shadows fade and wait for the moon. Five hours later, it has climbed into the eastern sky, and I am looking for a place to make camp for the night. My body hurts in a dozen spots, and I am soaked with sweat and weary beyond caring. I must be following a shell trail used by the Hohokam hundreds of years ago on their return from the Sea of Cortez, because in the moonlight I can see white pieces of shell on the ground. There are also dark fragments the size of my hands, and I bend down, feeling potsherds.

I come to a huge wash and find a spot to camp for the night. I throw my pack down in the middle of the wash which, in the pale moonglow, looks like a beach by the ocean. I start a small fire, illuminating the dark side of an ironwood tree from which dead branches hang. I go into the thick of the ironwood, gathering wood for the fire. A sting claws the back of my calf, and I back away from what I imagine to be a cholla cactus. I drag the wood over to the fire and stoke up the flames so I can see. I take the hemostats from the medical pocket of my pack and roll up my pants leg, looking for cactus spines. I pull a sliver from my calf, a curved, tapered thing. I take off the small flashlight I always string about my neck and shine the light on my calf. There are two oozy red marks. I look at the tapered sliver I am holding in my hand—it is a small fang. I had backed into a rattlesnake, probably a Sonoran sidewinder. Funny, I didn't hear or see a thing.

This could be serious. I recall that, for the first time ever out here, I don't have a snake-bite kit. I left it behind, figuring winter would be too cold for snakes. It's a dozen miles to the nearest water and maybe sixty to the nearest human. No one knows where I am or what route I am taking. I have six quarts of water. In the flick of a second my brain computes the odds: you're going to die, idiot.

I lie on the sand next to the fire thinking about what I should do. Should I tie a constricting band around my leg? Should I try to cool the bite with a water-soaked rag?

Then it is dark. The fire has burned down to white ash. I know I am dead. Slowly I move my arms and touch my face. Everything seems to be there. I grab the small flashlight and shine the light on the calf I know to be black, bloated, and necrotic. The two puncture marks are discolored and slightly swollen, but the leg is of normal size. I fall asleep. And survive. The next time I get nailed by a rattlesnake in the middle of nowhere I'll take two aspirin and sleep for six hours.

I throw wood on the fire and try to reconstruct what has happened. I must have backed into the rattlesnake in the pile of

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

**It's a small fang. I had backed into a rattler. I blurt, "Idiot, you are going to die."**

**(Top)** ***A graceful ocotillo cactus of the Sonoran desert lifts its spiney arms in a graceful sweep against the sky.***
**(Bottom) Tinajas,** ***natural rock catch basins, store water that serves as a lifesaver for desert travelers.***

branches under the ironwood tree. Since it is winter, though a warm winter, the snake would be sluggish and not rattle a warning. The luckiest thing was that the rattler had not ejected his venom; the bite was dry. I know strikes without venom happen not infrequently, though I don't know why. Maybe the snake had just fed.

The sky lightens, and a band of sun hits the western ridges. I check my calf one more time: a small but nasty-looking pair of puncture wounds which should heal into a memorable scar. I heat a canteen cup of water on the bed of coals and dump in a dirty-looking mixture of protein powder and powdered milk, which, when warm, is quite tasty. Thus fueled, I cram my gear into the big pack, take a swig of water, and step out of the wash up onto a bench of volcanic boulders and desert pavement, almost immediately picking up the ancient shell path.

After a quarter of a mile, I come to a pile of dark potsherds. I pick up a couple pieces of rim and fit them together; it appears that a large part of a big olla is lying here in a heap. I am tempted to pick up the pot and stash it in my pack, carrying it out where I could have the fun of gluing it all back together again. I did that once. Yet a year later, I carried the same pot back into these mountains and returned it. I should never have removed it. These artifacts are part of the landscape. As much as I am fascinated with prehistory, my scientific tendencies are superceded by an impulse to treat the dead and their leavings with reverence. These pieces of pottery are better left where they lie, reminding us that we were not the first, nor will we be the last, to pass this way. The shards ring like bells as I drop them back on the desert floor. I head up the long canyon.

THE WASH PINCHES OUT BETWEEN TWO FIFTEEN-hundred-foot-high ridges, and I find it easier to continue walking on the canyon bottom. You can't see much, but you don't have to struggle through all the side gullies. About midmorning I climb out onto the bedrock and cross a small divide. At the pass is a boulder with an inscription scratched on it: "John Moore 1909." I have run into the name John Moore more than once before out here, etched on boulders in widely scattered areas, usually where there is a pleasant view of the surrounding country. I wonder who John Moore was and what he was doing out here.

Continuing, I make my way up the ancient trail toward the second water hole. On another large boulder, I come on it again: "John Moore 1910." At least he made it another year. I come to more markings on the rock along the old Indian trail, this time, petroglyphs—rock etchings of motifs and symbols, difficult to decipher, not the usual deer and circles.

A thin line of dampness marks a trickle of water seeping out of the lower tank down a rock face and into a shallow basin, around which bees buzz. I climb up to the larger tanks above, rock basins that dry up only after six months of drought. Only once have I found these natural tanks dry. Father Kino, the eighteenth century Spanish missionary, watered here. I fill my canteens, and glass along the shaded ledges for bedded sheep. Nothing. Reading the scattered ovoids of dung, I conclude that desert bighorn must frequent these *tinajas* every few days. I linger but a few minutes, then turn back and return down the trail lined with the petroglyphs.

The temperature rises into the seventies. I hike across the soft sands of a small wash and see the imprints of sandals leading to the shade of a paloverde. A broken plastic milk container lies on the sand—the leaving of an illegal refugee who wandered up from the border south of here. I hope he made it. A summer or two ago, the border patrol pulled five bodies off the playa I have just crossed, leaving six more they couldn't find.

* * * * * * *

I go on, crossing the benches and flats just above the narrow, rocky wash of the valley. Tiny hoof prints dot the desert floor, the blunted cloven tracks of javelina. A cottontail rabbit bursts from a clump of brittlebush. Another of John Moore's inscriptions lies at the end of this stage of my journey, the halfway point in the trek. Knowing John Moore walked this route is comforting, as I am feeling low today, probably from hunger. My lack of food is the result of no accident. Grub is heavy, and I didn't come out here to eat. I wanted to clean myself out and think about things. Life hasn't been all roses lately; in the past year I have lost a couple of close friends, who, with me, loved this hunk of wild desert. For a while, I couldn't let go of them. Now I need to leave that part of me behind, out here.

Far down the wash I can see a huge rock out by itself, alone in the playa like an iceberg on a green sea, drowning in its own detritus. The rock is my landmark. I stumble toward it down the wash, treading lightly on my bruised feet. Entering another playa, I turn southward past an arc of basaltic hills. Three small volcanic peaks, pyramids of basalt, sit alone out on the playa. The center peak, a couple of miles away, is my destination.

The sky fades crimson, then darkens, and a cool breeze blows out of the southwest. I stop here for the night. From far out on the playa comes the faint but rapid chewk-chewking of an elf owl leaving his hole in a saguaro for an evening's hunting. I wish him luck, thinking that on such a winter night only a rare kangaroo rat would be out.

AT DAWN, I WAKE TO A CLOUDLESS DESERT SKY, KICK myself free of the sleeping bag, and step onto cool sands. From down the wash, around a corner of paloverde, the clucking of a covey of Gambel's quail floats up into the morning stillness. I pull on my boots, stash my sleeping gear in the wash, shoulder the pack, and start toward the three volcanic peaks.

Full of energy, I walk rapidly to the foot of the central peak. Bucket-sized blocks of carbonate-stained basalt teeter and roll as I inch my way up the jumble of rocks and step finally over a black ledge onto the summit. In three directions the land falls away to the grey expanse of playa. To the west the long arc of mixed volcanics rises five hundred feet into the clear sky, then curves and tapers to the north and south like the black horns of an extinct bison.

Standing on the crest of the ridge, I face into the great crescent of stone. On the western end of the ridge is a pile of

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

**A few years ago the patrol pulled five bodies off the playa that I have just hiked.**

***A perfect, bright green agave has withstood attacks from pests of all kinds to thrive and decorate the desert scene.***

boulders about five feet tall, obviously man-constructed. I walk along the ridge to the cairn, feeling the morning sun on my back. At my feet, in the coarse ash of the ridgetop, an alignment of small rocks spells out the name John Moore.

I stand motionless facing into the gentle wind. I lower my pack, step over to the cairn, and drop to my knees. I pick at several small angular pieces of basalt at the eastern base of the cairn and finally loosen a large keystone which I pull free from the tower of black rocks. Inside the pile is a recess, a cavity I quickly check for sleeping rattlesnakes. I reach into the chamber and pull out a coyote skull, two pieces of green mineralized rock, a raven feather, two arrowheads, a candle, another skull (maybe of a skunk), fragments of pottery, and pieces of shell. I feel each object, then lay it in the sun. I sort through the bottom of my pack, finding two small bundles of coarse black hair and the bleached flat-nosed skull of a large bighorn sheep, with the horny protuberances chewed down to short nubs, the horn sheaths missing.

This cairn, which I have always assumed was left by John Moore, is a shrine, not a claim marker—there is nothing here to claim. I have adopted it, adding my offerings as a memorial to my dead. In the solitude and silence, a weight lifts from me.

I look behind the crescent of black hills to the dark-headed mountain that dominates this range. On the top of that peak, I know, is another cairn and nearby, incised in stone, the name and date: "John D. Moore 1908." Next to that cairn were found two old .45 caliber Colt cartridges rammed together to make a little capsule. Inside was a note: "Was it worth it?"

Concluding my business, I turn away from the pile of rocks and look out across the valley to the distant ranges I have to cross to get out. I chart a route across the playas through low passes and gaps in the mountains, thinking that it might take me only three or four camps to reach the other side. The task from here is to make it to the spring before my tired body breaks down or I run out of water. The distance to the spring, as the raven flies, is sixty miles. In between lie only two sources of water: a *tinaja* in the sierra and an old well on the jeep trail far to the south. I plan on bypassing the well. . . .

To the east, across the *bajada* (a broad desert playa), the dark outline of a rugged mountain chain rises into the morning sky. I head out into the creosote playa, aiming for the only low notch, a pass in the mountain range. I walk along, following the thousand-year-old footpath, stopping to pick up a crescent of white shell. It is the rim of a large clam, one of the Glycymeris shells that the Hohokam carried north to the valleys of the Salt and Gila.

* * * * * * *

I keep moving eastward and reach the low rugged pass in the sierra. A faint but discernible foot trail snakes through the boulder field. Along the path are more pieces of pottery. A deep, rocky wash runs east on the playa where I turn south along the base of the mountain chain toward the last water hole. I climb to the top of an outlying hill for a better view and chart a route southeast past two small mountain ranges toward the hills that overlook the spring, the end of my walk. It looks as though I can avoid the mountains altogether and stick to the

easier terrain of the *bajada*. I could knock it off in two long days. For the first time since the beginning of the trek, I feel a tug of loneliness. . . . The catharsis of days of solitude and desert walking has drained me of extraneous thoughts, and I dwell on the mundane, the immediate. It strikes me that I will not take this walk again and that I may never again see this wild valley. . . .

I am close to the end of my trip and want to see where I am. I climb the summit of one of the small peaks overlooking Mexico. A purple line of cirrus clouds blocks the last rays of the setting sun. Below me, not more than a mile distant, lies the slate surface of the pond below the spring.

I turn, looking back across the lonely playas and the rugged ranges that I have crossed, and I am grateful for them. I feel at home on the desert—it lifts me above myself. I think of John Moore, remembering the note in the capsule asking "Was it worth it?" I know my answer.

**Doug Peacock** *says: "A wilderness walk may prove to be one of our last true freedoms. This desert trek will no longer be possible if the managers of the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge continue to grade roads in this fragile desert country." Peacock is finishing a book about Vietnam and grizzly bears. (See his "A Gathering of Grizzlies,"* AMERICAN WEST, *November/December 1984.)*

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

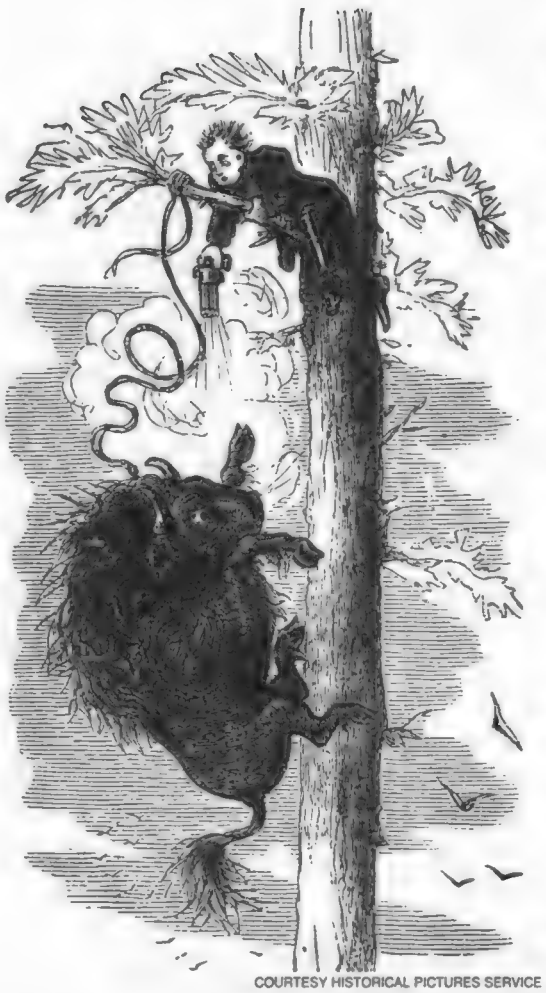
**This cairn is a shrine. I have adopted it, adding my offerings to honor my dead.**

**(Top)** ***John Moore left his mark in a number of places on the Arizona desert. His felt-presence was a friendly companion for Doug Peacock.***
**(Bottom)** ***This after-sunset photograph emphasizes the beauty and peace of the desert, with blue mountains as sentinels over all.***

## Shooting buffalo with handguns

# Did Pistol Paintin' Artists Hoodwink the Public?

**by Durrett Wagner**

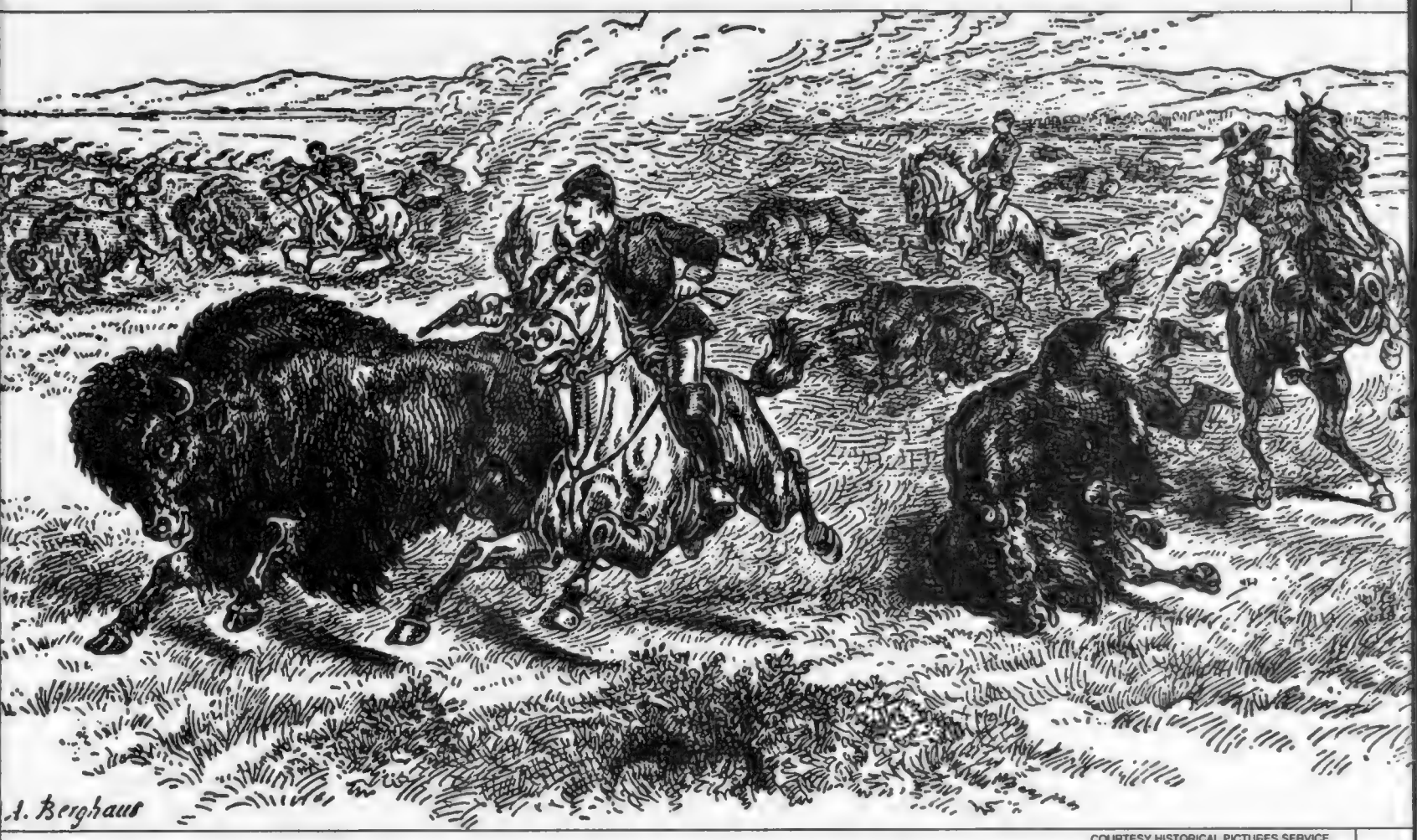


COURTESY HISTORICAL PICTURES SERVICE

CAN BUFFALO CLIMB TREES? CAN BUFFALO BE KILLED with pistols? In his *Roughing It*, Mark Twain reports the preposterous story told him by his traveling companion George Bemis, the upshot of which is illustrated here by the drawing from Twain's book. Bemis, on a buffalo hunt, was chased by a wounded but persistent bull. Bemis's horse, "hungry for solitude," made a run for it, but the girth broke—thus Bemis, saddle, and horse parted company. The buffalo stayed with Bemis, who promptly climbed "the only solitary tree there was in nine counties adjacent." The buffalo climbed after him. All ended reasonably well for Bemis, considering the circumstances. He escaped with the aid of his rope and his Allen revolver. The pistol did not kill the buffalo but did "scare the bull out of his senses." With Twain we can heartily conclude about Bemis: "If this man was not a liar he only missed it by the skin of his teeth."

Guilt by association is the point of all this. We laugh at Twain's tall tale, and rightly so; it and the picture are humorous. While laughing, however, we may well conclude that shooting a buffalo with a pistol is as outlandish as the beast's tree climbing, leading us further to view with skepticism the scores of serious paintings and drawings depicting buffalo

***In a tall tale from Mark Twain's account of his Western experiences, George Bemis was trapped by a tree-climbing buffalo who was discouraged from further advance by Bemis's Allen revolver. This illustration appeared in the original 1872 edition of Twain's*** **Roughing It.**

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hunts with pistols. We might easily judge that there was a bit of Bemis (or Twain) in the artists.

Have artists of the Western scene simply indulged their fancies with palette and pen and pistol? The truth of the matter is that pistols were actually used in buffalo hunts. Artistic renderings of shooting buffalo with revolvers *are* authentic; we have credible written accounts to document the practice.

In 1832 author Washington Irving accompanied an Indian peace-treaty commission out of Fort Gibson, in what is today Oklahoma. Irving later wrote in *A Tour on the Prairies*, "Pistols are very effective in buffalo hunting, as a hunter can ride up close to the animal, and fire at it while at full speed." Alas, Irving's own try was a failure. In his first buffalo hunt, he recalled, "I urged my horse sufficiently near, when, taking aim, to my chagrin, both pistols missed fire."

Two years later, artist George Catlin accompanied United States Dragoons on an assignment westward out of the same Fort Gibson. Near the Red River they came upon a herd of buffalo, and Catlin tells how "General Leavenworth and Colonel Dodge, with their pistols, gallantly and handsomely belaboured a fat cow, and were in together at the death."

Newspaperman George W. Kendall was with the Texan – Santa Fe Expedition in 1841. On one buffalo hunt, Kendall and two companions (carrying a total of eight pistols) chased a bull. Two days and many miles later it was finally killed with "a single well-directed ball. . . . On taking off his hide, it was found that more than thirty balls had struck him . . . and not one of them had touched a vital part."

***Using their service revolvers to kill their prey, two groups of officers from the Seventh Cavalry stationed at Fort Hays, Kansas, are shown in a buffalo-hunt contest in 1867. George Armstrong Custer was among the pistol-carrying hunters. Albert Berghaus drew this illustration for the 1893 edition of Elizabeth B. Custer's* Tenting on the Plains.**

IN OCTOBER 1867, BEFORE HE BECAME KNOWN AS the governor of New Mexico Territory and the author of *Ben Hur*, Lew Wallace hunted buffalo in northern Mexico. Carrying a Winchester rifle, Wallace mistakenly rode up on the wrong side of the buffalo cow he was chasing. "Goodness! I was left of the game when, being right-handed, I should have gone to the right. Three times I tried to get aim, but in vain. I laid the gun across the saddle, and drew pistol—a Smith & Wesson. . . . Now, fire! The bullet lodged in the shoulder. Again, and in the heart; hurrah! . . . The rifle fell to the ground; . . . the victim moaned, staggered, stumbled, fell."

Miguel A. Otero, also later governor of New Mexico Territory, remembered youthful fun in Kansas under Wild Bill Hickok's tutelage: "In a chase he would cut out a cow and maneuver the animal so that either my brother or I could get an easy shot and down the buffalo. After we had one apiece, he seemed perfectly satisfied. . . . He would then take us with him into the herd, killing two or three with his pistol on the run, but invariably keeping his eye on us." In the hands of an expert, a pistol was an effective weapon against a buffalo.

*On the Western plains, a dying buffalo falls at the hands of an energetic hunter who prefers to use his pistol to dispatch his prey. The scene was portrayed by F. O. C. Darley, a popular artist whose images of the Western scene were highly regarded in the midnineteenth century.*

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*Frederic Remington depicted this unusual incident involving Lieutenant Colonel George Custer when the latter was stationed with the Seventh Cavalry at Fort Hays, Kansas, in 1867. On foot, Custer confronts a bull buffalo after accidentally discharging his pistol and shooting his horse, which lies dead in the background. Remington's drawing appeared in Mrs. Custer's* **Tenting on the Plains** *(1893).*

However, for maximum effectiveness the bullet should strike the *buffalo*. In the spring of 1867, General George Custer, buffalo hunting out of Fort Hays, Kansas, accidentally discharged his pistol and fatally shot his horse instead of the buffalo. Three weeks later, on another hunt, Custer again shot his mount with his pistol—only wounding the horse this time.

Though Custer seemed awkward or unlucky in his early buffalo encounters, he redeemed himself with Czar Alexander II's son. In late 1871 the Russian czar sent his son, the Grand Duke Alexis, to the United States on a kind of goodwill visit. After parties, dinners, dances, and tours in the east, the grand duke took a train westward in January 1872 and enjoyed two buffalo hunts, one in Nebraska and one in Colorado. Custer was his constant companion. While in the eastern U.S., Alexis had visited the Smith & Wesson gun factory, which had been supplying the Russian government with .44 revolvers for a number of months. Perhaps this explains the grand duke's penchant for pistols in hunting buffalo. In any case, with guidance from Custer and William F. Cody, Alexis killed almost a dozen buffalo, using handguns.

The attraction of the handgun for hunting buffalo was the "sport" associated with it. Though pistols were at times used in serious hunts, they were primarily the weapons of sport and convenience employed by tourists and army officers, while

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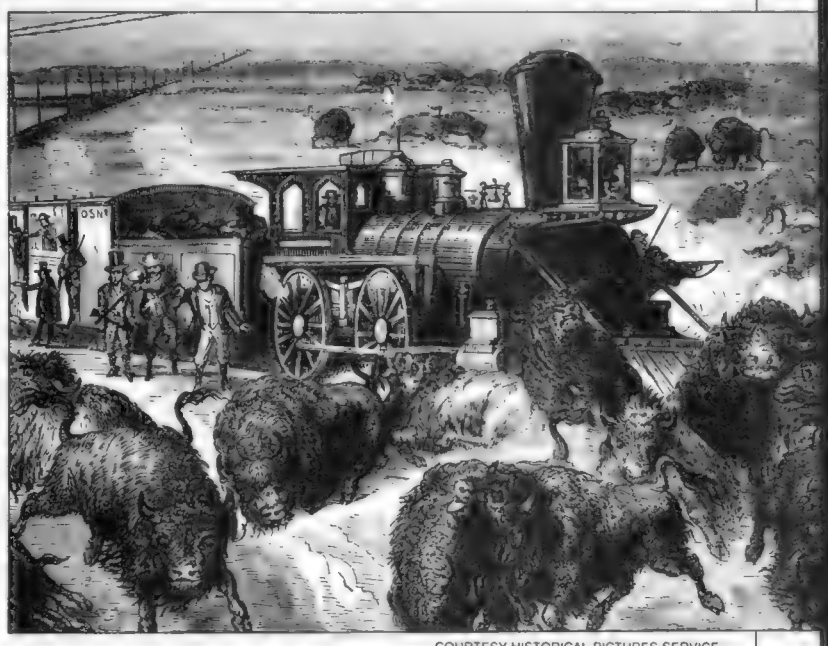
**(Above)** ***The Russian Grand Duke Alexis used a pistol on hunts in Nebraska and Colorado, killing almost a dozen buffalo. In this drawing by Albert Berghaus (*** **Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,** ***February 3, 1872), Alexis is shown on the Nebraska hunt during January of 1872. The mounted figure to the right of the Grand Duke is puzzling. He seems to be in Indian garb, yet he is wearing a well-trimmed, dark mustache with goatee, and his skin is pale.*** **(Right)** ***"A most cruel and foolish fashion" prevailed of shooting buffalo from trains "with rifles, carbines, and revolvers." Drawing from R. I. Dodge,*** **The Plains of the Great West,** ***1877.***

guides and enlisted men did the needed killing with rifles. (I leave to the reader's judgment whether John Charles Frémont and his exploring party were gunning for meat or for sport in August 1843 near South Pass when they used an Army howitzer to shoot buffalo.) The effectiveness of handguns depended upon the calibre and the ammunition, the skill of the shooter, and sometimes, luck. With the right combination, even a hefty bull could be brought down with one shot.



COURTESY HISTORICAL PICTURES SERVICE

**Durrett Wagner** *was for a dozen years co-owner and editor-in-chief of Swallow Press. He is now president of Historical Pictures Service, Inc. in Chicago.*

*Shaded by boater and bonnets and gussied up in Sunday finery, "Papa" and "Mama" Thomas pose with baby Phyllis in the countryside. Mama was an energetic little woman with a mind of her own.*

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY THE AUTHOR

# Memories of Mama The Doer

## Her contest with the Chinese cook

by Jewell Devitt

WHEN PAPA WENT TO WORK IN 1917 FOR HENRY Miller, Jr., heir to the California cattle kingdom of Miller & Lux, my sister was ten years old and I was six and a half. Papa was to be foreman at the Bloomfield Ranch in Gilroy.

The ranch was a little town, headquarters for what was once the largest ranching enterprise on the Pacific Coast. It had its own store where the wives of the cowboys bought groceries and sundries and where the cowboys bought clothing and tobacco. We had our own railway station, the end of a spur track on which a big, black locomotive we called Betsy and three box cars brought grain to store in the big silos standing lonesome in a back field. There was always excitement on the days the train rolled in. Papa wouldn't let us go to the silos because of the danger, but we stood on the front porch and watched the puffs of black smoke from Betsy's stack as she thundered by. Papa was right about the danger. One day the engineer misjudged, and Betsy went over on her side and into a ditch. There was real excitement then. People came from miles around and sat in their buggies to watch the heavy equipment get Betsy on her feet.

Besides the store and the rail stop, the ranch included six houses plus bunkhouses and workshops. Henry Miller, Jr., and his wife Sarah lived in the big house, where they often entertained guests from the city. The house had forty-four elaborately decorated and immaculate rooms, twelve pianos, and a tower room always full of dead flies. My sister often wanted to go up there because one could see so far into Gilroy on the north, Hollister on the south, and our grandparents' ranch to the northwest. I didn't like those big black blowflies, even if we could see clear into town, but we made many a trip up those stairs.

We had our own cottage, but we ate all our meals in the big house with other supervisors on the ranch. Dinner began promptly at six o'clock. At five-thirty we were scrubbed, brushed, and brought up to date on our table manners. "Please don't spill your milk; don't forget to say 'thank you' when you are served; never speak unless you are spoken to; and don't squirm in your chairs."

Papa rode a big white horse called Galahad. It had to be big, because Papa was a big man. He wasn't heavy, but he was over six feet tall, and his legs were so long he had to have a special saddle with longer stirrups.

Mama was only five feet tall, but what a doer! I never saw her sitting down unless it was at the sewing machine. Her house was immaculate. She was always busy, but we knew where she was at all times for she walked on her heels, and they clicked as she came down on them. She liked to cook, and she would have been happier if we had been able to eat in our own home.

My sister, Phyllis, and I loved living on the ranch.The chef in the big house was our friend. He always had goodies for us when we came home from school. His sugar cookies were our favorites; they were cut into animal shapes and decorated with colored frosting.

Fugi, the little Japanese gardener, was our friend, too. He didn't allow us to walk in his flower bed, though. If we lost a

ball in his shrubbery, it stayed there until Fugi recovered it for us. Even Mama didn't dare interfere. But oh, the days when Fugi came to the door with armfuls of daffodils, tulips, and Scotch heather! "For your teachers," he would say and make his retreat, bowing.

After a year Papa was transferred. The company made him a troubleshooter. Because he was good with the men, they sent him to one of the company's other ranches where there was trouble brewing. Mama was happy! She thought she would have her own kitchen and be her own boss, but this was not to be.

Dryer ranch, our new home, was about twenty miles away from the headquarters ranch. Papa went ahead on Galahad. Two days later the new foreman at Bloomfield drove us over in the carriage. It was a warm summer day, and we were hot and tired when we finally reached the driveway to the long narrow ranch house. As we stepped from the carriage, we saw a Chinese man standing under a black walnut tree. Sing Lee's long black hair fell in a pigtail down his back. He wore black silk slippers, a black skullcap, and a black alpaca mandarin suit. He was bowing and grinning at the same time, his hands in the prayer position in front of him.

"Welcome, Missies, welcome," he said, "Sing Lee here take care." I watched Mama's soft, full lips change into a firm, straight line, and I saw her eyes snap with anger. That night when Papa came in off the range, she let go of her frustrations.

"This is our house," she said. "I don't want him pussyfooting around. I am perfectly capable of taking care of it by myself." Poor Papa listened. Finally he said, "Sing Lee comes with the house. We can't send him away."

THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED WERE SAD ONES FOR MAMA and for Sing Lee. When he was hired, he was told to take care of us, and this he planned to do, but a Chinese cook's kitchen was his castle, and no one—not even Mama—was welcome. Mama told us at the dinner table one night that she wanted to make a bread pudding for a sick neighbor. Later, as we sat in the parlor, Sing Lee tapped lightly on the door to tell Mama her bread pudding was in the cooler. Mama liked to sweep leaves off our front porch, but whenever she picked up a broom, Sing Lee took it away from her. "You little, Missy. You sew, maybe." Mama said nothing until he was gone. Then she stamped her foot and murmured, "This is my house."

Two small girls on a ranch way out in the country couldn't know anything about Chinese tong wars in the city, but the day Phyllis and I looked out our playroom window and saw a big black limousine coming down the driveway, we sensed something was wrong. Four Chinese men sat inside the car. They were big men, and they wore black bowler hats.

Sing Lee was sweeping off the front porch when he saw them. He dropped the broom and came running in the front door, calling for Mama, who was in her bedroom at the sewing machine. Mama and Papa's bedroom was off limits for Sing Lee, and he knew it, but this didn't stop him. As Mama jumped up, he fell to his knees and grabbed her skirt.

"Please, Missy, hide Sing Lee—the highbinders come." Mama went into action. She knew highbinders were killers.

***Under the striped roof of this Victorian mansion, the family of California cattle king Henry Miller entertained guests on the headquarters ranch in Gilroy. Young Jewell and Phyllis Thomas*** (below) ***dined in "the big house" each night with their parents and other supervisors.***

## When Sing Lee fell to his knees, Mama went into action. She knew highbinders were killers.

She threw back the edge of the bedspread which hung to the floor and said to Sing Lee, "Get under there." When she couldn't see him anymore, she put the spread down and turned to us. "Go to your room, girls, and be very quiet."

When the knocker sounded, all of Mama's five feet stood tall as she opened the door. "Mister handles all business," she said. "Intruders are not welcome in my home." Then slowly but firmly, she closed the door. After she locked it, she stood there for a moment with her two hands on the knob.

We heard the men arguing. We couldn't understand what they were saying, but they sounded mean. Finally they quieted down. We opened our door a crack to see what Mama was doing. She was at the window, and we saw her pull back the curtains to watch the men leave. Then she quickly sat in the nearest chair and put her head in her hands, but only for a minute. She was up in a flash, her heels clicking as she flew down the hall to her bedroom. We followed her.

"They are gone, Sing Lee," she said as she threw back the bedspread. "You can come out." Sing Lee hesitated. "You sure, Missy?"

Mama's tone was impatient. "Yes, I'm sure," she said. Slowly, Sing Lee slid out from under the bed. He stood for a minute in front of Mama. Then with his shaking hands again in the prayer position, he made a deep bow. As he bent down, we heard him say, "You one big lady, Missy."

When Papa came home that night, Phyllis and I were full of questions. Did he see the men? Why did they come? Did they go away for good? We were afraid to go to sleep for fear the men would come back, but Papa reassured us. "They won't come back," he said. "They came only because Sing Lee owed them money for his passage to America. They went to the headquarters, and the company paid them. Now Sing Lee will give his salary to the company until the debt is paid. As he kissed us good night, our fears disappeared.

After a time, Papa solved the help problems at the Dryer Ranch, but not before the troublemakers burned down the horse barn and put a dead owl in the water tank. Everyone but Sing Lee got sick. Mama said it was because he boiled his water and drank only tea. We were glad that he was there to take care of us, and so was he.

When Papa was transferred to another ranch, Sing Lee came with us. Part of the family now, he was still our cook and housekeeper. But because Mama had won his respect, he disappeared when she wanted to use the kitchen, and he was nowhere around when Mama swept our new front porch every morning. ✡

**Jewell Devitt's** *great grandfather settled on a Spanish land grant at Gilroy, California, in 1851. Today she lives in the Mother Lode at Mokelumne Hill.*

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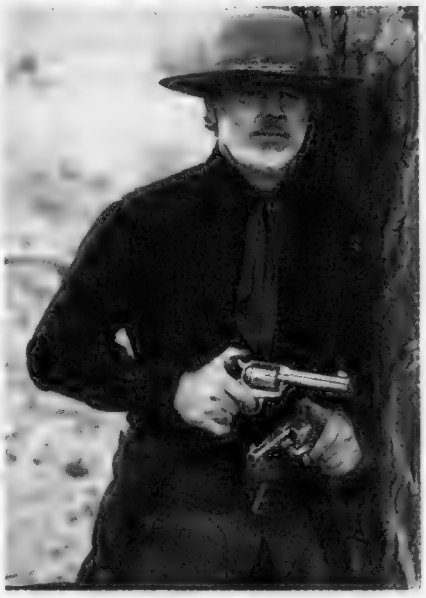

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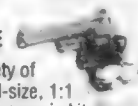

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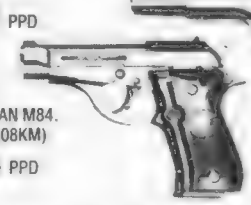

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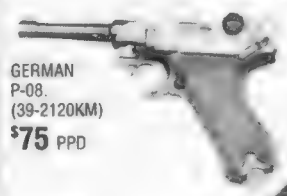

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# Hidden Inns & Lost Trails

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

## Soak Away Pains at Frontier Hotel

### by JoAnn Roe

Antique ambience has been preserved at Carson Hot Mineral Springs Hotel in the spectacular Columbia River Gorge near Carson, Washington. Rooms are spartan, often with a bare bulb suspended above an iron bedstead and simple dresser, a frontier decor unchanged for almost a century. Yet in a cheery dining room with red tablecloths and fresh flowers, the hearty food is tasty, and the setting among trees and hills is photogenic. Consequently, the old hotel is seldom empty. Even the locals drive the winding mountain road to Carson's to take hot baths, as they have done since the end of the nineteenth century. Comments in the guest book sum up their experiences: "Great—maybe I'll be able to walk soon." "Such a bargain." "A religious experience. Keep it up." "Wowee. 20 yrs. younger in 15 minutes." "Fantastic hideaway."

Pioneer settler Isadore St. Martin discovered the hot springs in 1876, later proving up a homestead that included them, a timbered site hugging the Washington flank of the mighty Columbia River. Originally called St. Martin's Springs, the bubbling waters are spawned deep in the earth below turbulent Mount St. Helens, the volcano that blew its pipe with a roar in 1980, only thirty miles distant. St. Martin was a farmer, logger, and stockman, married to an Indian princess from the Willamette Valley near Portland. When his wife, Margaret, developed neuralgia in 1881, St. Martin encouraged her to soak in the spring. The therapeutic visits became treasured family outings. The St. Martin children dangled their feet in the simmering pools and removed rocks and dirt to hollow out a family-sized tub for communal soaking.

Luther St. Martin, elderly grandson of Isadore and Margaret, says today that his grandmother fully realized the medicinal benefits of the waters, especially because she had learned natural medicine from her uncle, the tribal medicine man. Luther recalls her use of herbs on his father's arm to reverse blood poisoning caused by a human bite received during a fight.

Neighbors and visitors noticed the new sprightliness of Margaret St. Martin, and they beseeched the St. Martins for permission to soak out their pains in the healing waters. To accommodate a growing number of paying bathers, Isadore built a crude roof over the hot holes or springs around 1895, later adding stalls for changing clothes. More pilgrims came, some staying with the St. Martin family, so severely stressing the living arrangements that tents were set up to oblige some of the visitors. For ten years Margaret baked bread for her guests in a brick oven out in the woods.

Until the locks were completed in 1896, the Cascade Rapids near Stevenson were a barrier to Columbia River traffic. St. Martin met his early guests with horse and buggy at the Stevenson docks or picked them up at the new railway station of the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway, a mile and a half distant. In 1914, when a road was constructed, visitors came to the hotel by car. There was only one problem: St. Martin's barn lay squarely across the road to the springs. Motorists had to drive *through* the barn to get to their destination.

Today's hotel structure was completed in 1900 and the adjacent bathhouse in 1923. Little has changed since then (except the barn is gone). When you enter any part of the facility, you are transported back to frontier times. Guests on comfortably worn sofas pore through dog-eared magazines. Yellowed newspaper clippings and historical photographs adorn the walls of the ancient lobby. Limp guests, their strength sapped by the hot baths, play desultory games of checkers. The baths are just that—claw-footed bathtubs filled with the mineral waters. Presided over by an attendant, who might also be the masseuse, the bathhouse has rows of cots where bathers lie for post-bath rests, wrapped like dolls in giant, soft towels from head to toe.

The 126° spring water, cooled to tolerable temperatures, contains potassium, sodium, calcium, magnesium, phosphate, nitrate, and silica. Some guests not only soak in the water but drink it as well, crediting it for relief of everything from arthritis to kidney disorders or poison oak.

Because the old hotel is strategically situated at the edge of Gifford Pinchot National Forest, guests come to enjoy the splendid outdoors, just as they did in 1900. During winter, cross-country skiers soothe aching muscles after trekking the nearby groomed trails. In summer, battered hikers leave the Pacific Crest Trail, eight miles away, to seek relief. Reliving history, some visitors to Carson Hot Mineral Springs Hotel travel on the sternwheeler *Columbia Gorge* as far as Stevenson.

Today the hotel has passed from the St. Martin family to Rudy Hegewald, an elderly entrepreneur who hopes to update the facilities without destroying their historical aura. While he makes plans, locals and visitors continue to bathe as simply now as in the 1890s.

**When You Go:** Carson is about fifty miles east of Portland, Oregon. Leaving Portland, drive east on Interstate 84 for about forty miles to Exit 44, the Cascade Locks Bridge of the Gods. Cross the bridge into Washington, then turn east on Highway 14. Go about five and one-half miles and turn north on the Carson cutoff, which is called Wind River Highway. The small town of Carson is just one mile farther. The Carson Hot Mineral Springs Hotel is on Hot Springs Avenue, one mile out of town. For more information, write to the hotel at P.O. Box 370, Carson, Washington 98610. Telephone (509) 427-8290.

**JoAnn Roe** *is a free-lance writer living in Bellingham, Washington. Her most recent contribution to* AMERICAN WEST *was "Bellingham's Daring Dash from Snow to Sea," May/June 1986.*

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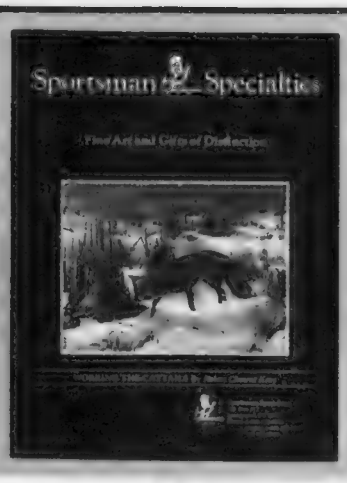


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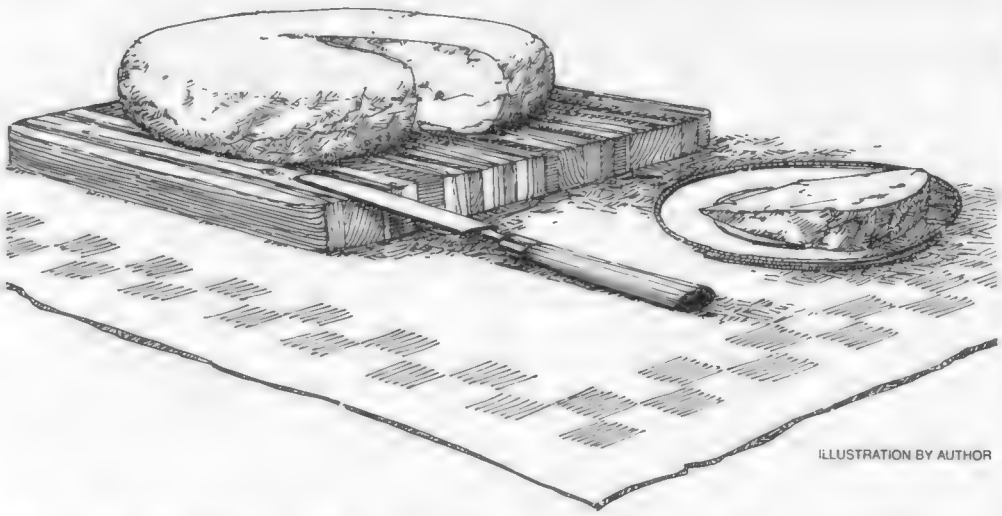

ILLUSTRATION BY AUTHOR

# Jack: The West's Own Cheese

## by Brian McGinty

When David Jacks began shipping wheels of creamy white cheese from the spindly wharf at Monterey, California, to grocery wholesalers in San Francisco sometime in the 1880s, the cheese was already well known along the coast of central California. The padres at the missions of Carmel, Soledad and San Antonio de Padua had, for nearly a century, made cheese from cow's milk according to the ancient methods of their Spanish and Mallorcan forebears. And the Spanish and Mexican rancheros of the region, whose herds of tough-skinned, thin-limbed longhorns grazed lazily on rich grass and clover, had followed the padres' example. But it was Jacks who brought the cheese to the tables of city dwellers, Jacks who stamped the disklike wheels with his name and shipping point, thus giving the cheese the name by which succeeding generations of cheese lovers would remember it: "Monterey Jacks" or—abbreviated slightly—"Monterey Jack."

The Spaniards and Mexicans called the cheese *el queso del país*—the cheese of the country. It was not made in large quantities, for the milk of the California longhorns was typically low in fat, a necessary ingredient in cheese making. But there was enough of the milk to keep the missions and the ranchos comfortably supplied with cheese for home consumption, with some left over to take to market in Monterey, where the householders greeted it with enthusiasm.

The cheese was made of whole milk according to a simple but time-honored formula. The milk was taken from the cows in the evenings, poured from milk buckets into large kettles, then cooled by draping the sides of the kettles with wet cloths or when the nights were cold, letting them stand outdoors. In the mornings, the cool milk was mixed with a starter of sour (or clabbered) milk and slowly heated over a low fire. Rennet was added to begin the process of curdling. When the curds were firm and springy—about the consistency of custard—they were cut into chunks and cooked over a medium fire for an hour or so. The whey was drained off, salt was mixed in with the curds, and molds were prepared for forming the wheels. The molds were buckets lined with squares of rough cloth, each about a yard square. A measure of curds was poured into each bucket, then the corners of the cloth were gathered together and tied tightly at the top. After several wheels were formed, they were arranged in a row on the cheese press, which was a rough wooden bench with a pole attached at one end. A square of wood was placed over each wheel, then the pole was pulled down on top and a bag filled with heavy stones hung from the unattached end. Thus, over a period of about twenty hours, the cheese was pressed into firm, creamy white disks.

When David Jacks arrived in Monterey in January of 1850, he could hardly have imagined that his name would one day be applied (albeit without the final "s") to the local cheese. Born in Scotland in 1822, Jacks crossed the ocean to New York in 1841 and, seven years later, pushed on to San Francisco. When he arrived in Monterey, the once-bustling capital of Spanish and Mexican California had settled into a dreary somnolence. But Jacks seemed not to care. He worked as a clerk in a store, lived frugally, saved his money, and invested it wisely. By the 1880s, he had accumulated more than 60,000 acres of the finest land in Monterey County—land that included several dairies that produced a fine grade of the county's *queso del país*. Sensing that there was a market for the cheese beyond the central coast, Jacks began sending modest shipments from his warehouse near the Monterey wharf. The cheese was well received in San Francisco and, later, in towns and cities throughout the West.

A few years after Jacks's death in 1909, the cheese that bears his name enjoyed a great burst of national popularity. The outbreak of World War I disrupted normal trade lines between the United States and Western Europe, causing widespread cheese shortages in American stores. Rising to meet the shortages, Jack cheese producers in central California doubled, tripled, and even quadrupled their outputs. In a few years, Jack became familiar to housewives and cooks all over America.

Today, Jack remains the only widely marketed cheese originated in the West. Although it is no longer produced in Monterey County, it has become a staple of specialty cheese factories widely scattered through northern and central California; and it is produced in commercial quantities in Wisconsin, too. The popularity of the cheese is not hard to explain. Its natural freshness nicely complements the spicy flavors of Mexican and Italian dishes. It blends well with fondues, is widely used in quiches, and is a fine sandwich cheese. Jack is a popular "nibbling cheese," too, as it harmonizes well with beer and wine—particularly with fruity red wines like Beaujolais and Zinfandel.

Much of today's Jack cheese still bears the traditional name of "Monterey Jack." Some is named for the locality in which it is produced (e.g., "Sonoma Jack"), while increasing quantities are sold under the name of "California Jack," or just "Jack." Whatever the cheese is called, it is much the same product that David Jacks shipped from the wharf at Monterey in the 1880s, and that Spanish and Mexican rancheros pressed over wooden benches in the early years of the nineteenth century. A true native of California, Jack is the West's own cheese.

**Brian McGinty**'*s last contribution to* AMERICAN WEST *was* "Shooting for Rain," *January/February 1986.*

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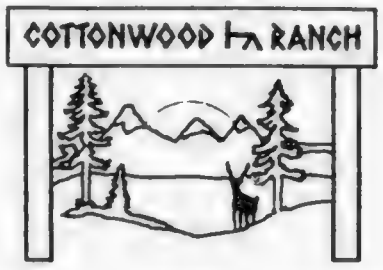


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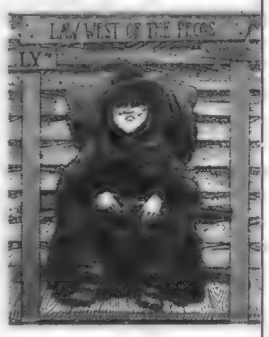


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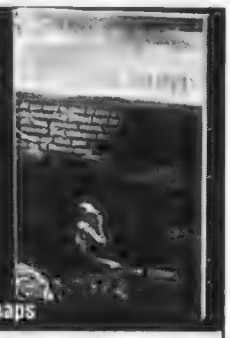

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# Western Books in Brief

***These books may be purchased from your local bookstore.* AMERICAN WEST *does not sell them.***

**A Limitless Sky: The Work of Charles M. Russell** *by Ginger Renner (Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona, 1986; 143 pp., illus., biblio., index, $35.00).*
Paintings, illustrations, and sculpture capturing life on the Great Plains are showcased in this book of Charles M. Russell's work. Full-color reproductions from the Rockwell Museum collection, including Russell's illustrations for the 1898 edition of *The Oregon Trail* by Francis Parkman, are accompanied by lively, informative captions. A biographical essay explains the artist's lifelong fascination with cowboys, Indians, and the expansive Western landscape.

**Islands of the West: From Baja to Vancouver** *photog. by Frans Lanting, text by Page Stegner (Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1985; 152 pp., illus., maps, notes, biblio., index, $35.00).*
The islands that lie off North America's west coast are explored and described in this attractive book. The author shares a wealth of human and natural history as well as personal impressions gathered on his island-hopping excursions, while spectacular color photographs convey the unique environment of each of these Pacific gems. Together the text and photos promote conservation of wildlife, marine mammals, and seabirds whose sanctuary on these islands is threatened by real-estate development, logging, waste-dumping, and other abuses.

**Dream Tracks: The Railroad and the American Indian** *by T. C. McLuhan (Henry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1985; 208 pp., illus., notes, biblio., index, $37.50).*
At the turn of the century, the Santa Fe Railway launched an advertising campaign to attract tourists to the southwest. Romantic paintings and hand-colored photographs depicting dramatic desert scenery and colorful Indian tribes appeared on calendars, posters, and brochures. The author's discussion of the railroad's strategy to lure the public west and her artful presentation of more than 110 of these unique reproductions of hand-colored lantern slides document "a fascinating story of corporate mythmaking and the American dream."

**J. H. Sharp: Among the Crow Indians, 1902–1910** *by Carolyn Reynolds Riebeth (Upton and Sons, El Segundo, California, 1985; 178 pp., illus., maps, notes, biblio., index, $65.00).*
At the turn of the century, J. H. Sharp moved to the Crow Agency in Montana to paint portraits of northern Plains Indians. This book of fond reminiscences focuses on the eight years there when Sharp and his wife Addie were close friends of the author's family. Twelve color reproductions of Sharp's oil paintings, many pencil sketches, and photographs by the artist and his friends are included in this inviting second volume of the Montana and the West series.

**Simple Foods for the Pack: The Sierra Club Guide to Delicious Natural Foods for the Trail** *by Claudia Axcell, Diana Cooke, and Vikki Kinmount (Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1986; 256 pp., illus., appendices, biblio., index, paper $8.95).*
The recipes of a Cordon Bleu chef, the talent of a professional writer, and the insights of a former trail guide make the contents of this handy backpacking cookbook delectable, readable, and practical. Learn how to whip up a batch of High-Protein Almond Cookies at home to take along on your hike. Or, by following easy methods at your campsite, prepare an exotic meal like Salmon in Tomato Orange Sauce or Mung Bean Stew to enjoy under the stars. Emphasis on natural ingredients and tips on packaging food ensure healthy, sensible eating wherever your trail may lead you.

**Place Names of the Sierra Nevada: From Abbot to Zumwalt** *by Peter Browning (Wilderness Press, Berkeley, 1986; 257 pp., biblio., cloth $19.95, paper $11.95).*
Anyone who has ever wondered how places in the Sierra Nevada like Coffeepot Canyon and Basket Dome came to be named will find the answers in this comprehensive reference guide. Lore about names of thousands of peaks, valleys, lakes, streams, meadows, passes, and other natural landmarks of this famous mountain range sheds light on the area's past. Each entry for a particular place mentions the origin of its name, pertinent quotes and anecdotes from early explorers, and its altitude, then indicates on which U.S. Geological Survey topographical map the place can be found.


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**Flowering Plants: The Santa Monica Mountains, Coastal & Chaparral Regions of Southern California** *by Nancy Dale (Capra Press, Santa Barbara, 1986; 240 pp., illus., maps, biblio., glossary, index, paper $15.95).*
Wildflower lovers in Southern California will be delighted by this popular introduction to the flowering plants of the Santa Monica Mountains. Each entry briefly describes the cultural and botanical history of a particular plant, and is illustrated with a botanical drawing or striking color photograph. This easy-to-use guide to more than 300 species also includes suggested wildflower trips through parks, beaches, and ranches of the area.

**The Great Towns of California: A Guide to Special Places and Pleasures** *by David Vokac (West Press, San Diego, 1986; 304 pp., illus., index, paper $8.95).*
The natural and cultural pleasures of sixteen diverse California towns are described in this informative guide. Each chapter includes a concise town history, weather profile, and listings of attractions, restaurants, lodgings, shops, nightlife, campgrounds, and local celebrations of places like Solvang, Carmel, and Mendocino. The author rates each feature and provides vacation-planning readers with helpful addresses and prices.

**Rediscovering America: John Muir in His Time and Ours** *by Frederick Turner (Viking, New York, 1985; 429 pp., illus., notes, index, $25.00).*
Here is the extraordinary story of John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club and one of America's greatest naturalists and conservationists. Born in Scotland, Muir moved to a Wisconsin farm with his family at the age of eleven. Later, after a short-lived career as an inventor, Muir embarked upon a lifetime of adventures as a rambling naturalist. This rich biography reveals the complex nature of the mountain man who entertained contemporaries like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Roosevelt in the Western lands he so loved.

**Solomon D. Butcher: Photographing the American Dream** *by John E. Carter (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1985; 151 pp., illus., $28.95).*
At the turn of the century frontier photographer Solomon D. Butcher (1856–1927) used his camera to produce a pictorial history of the Great Plains settlers. Sober homesteaders posed with their prized possessions in front of their sod houses bring to mind the challenges of living off the land. Demonstrating a sense of humor and an ability to salvage a botched job, Butcher sometimes tampered with his negatives to alter a scene or disguise a technical flaw—so expect a few surprises in this marvelous collection of 120 duotone photographs.

**J. E. Stimson: Photographer of the West** *by Mark Junge (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1985; 224 pp., illus., $29.95).*
When Joseph E. Stimson (1870–1952) set up a studio in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in 1889, it marked the beginning of a successful, sixty-year career in photography. As an official photographer for the Union Pacific Railroad, Stimson traveled throughout the rapidly changing West, documenting its commercial, industrial, and agricultural development. His sharply focused, black-and-white images of sturdy folks and the businesses and towns they built offer an enlightening record of a skilled artist and his era.

**John O'Shea, 1876–1956: The Artist's Life As I Know It** *by Walter A. Nelson-Rees (WIM, Oakland, California, 1985; 179 pp., illus., notes, biblio., $45.00).*
In a brilliant effort to rekindle interest in artist John O'Shea, the author presents an impressive collection of works by this Carmel artist who enjoyed popularity between World War I and World War II. The 153 color and thirty-two black-and-white reproductions of O'Shea's work reflect a wide range of sub-


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**THE SOUTHERN INDIANS AND BENJAMIN HAWKINS, 1796-1816**
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jects, from the jutting rocks and turbulent surf of California's coast to floral still lifes and portraits. A thorough biography recounts the fascinating life of the man dubbed "The Great O'Shea" by his contemporaries.

**The Western Bird Watcher** *by Kevin J. Zimmer (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1985; 288 pp., illus., biblio., glossary, index, paper $10.95).*
Beginning- or intermediate-level bird watchers will benefit from this guide to locating and identifying our fine feathered friends west of the Mississippi River. The author suggests where and when to see more than 200 Western species, and a chapter on keeping field notes teaches bird-lovers how to record their wealth of new discoveries.

**Ways of Indian Magic: Stories Retold** *by Teresa VanEtten (Sunstone Press, Santa Fe, 1985; 91 pp., illus., paper $8.95).*
These six Indian legends were originally told to Teresa VanEtten in Tewa, the Pueblo language she learned while working in her family's trading post at the San Juan Pueblo. This translated collection recounts magical moments in everyday lives, times when the pollen from a mystical corn plant would weave a wedding dress for a poor Indian girl. The tales are told in simple, sensual English; VanEtten whispers lines to the reader in the manner of her old storyteller friend, who would entertain her with legends of American Indian culture as they huddled before the post's potbellied stove.

**Atlas of the North American Indian** *text by Carl Waldman, maps and illus. by Molly Braun (Facts On File Publications, New York, 1985; 287 pp., illus., maps, appendix, biblio., index, $29.95).*
The history, culture, and geography of Indian tribes in the United States, Canada, and Middle America are clearly presented in this well-organized atlas. A wealth of historical and contemporary information makes for compelling reading, while hundreds of maps, drawings, and photos aid readers in visualizing the lifestyles and migrations of Indian peoples. Among the useful segments of the appendix are a chronology of Indian history, a list of current tribal locations, and a directory of Indian museums and archeological sites.

**Owen Wister: Chronicler of the West, Gentleman of the East** *by Darwin Payne (Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas, 1985; 392 pp., illus., $24.95).*
Upon his arrival at a Wyoming ranch in 1885 a young Philadelphian, grandson of the noted Shakespearean actress, Fanny Kemble, became immediately intrigued by the ways of the wild West. In this entertaining biography, we learn that the cowboys Owen Wister came to know and write about were certainly a different breed from his eastern friends—Theodore Roosevelt, Henry James, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., to name a few. A graduate of Harvard law school, Wister abandoned his practice to write, and in 1902, he gained overnight success with the publication of *The Virginian*. The biographer discusses Wister's eventual disillusionment with the West, and maintains that Wister "struggled mightily" with the conflicting ways of East and West, of traditional values and emerging commercialism during the course of his rich life.

**If These Walls Could Speak: Historic Forts of Texas** *paintings by J. U. Salvant, text by Robert M. Utley (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1985; 64 pp., illus., $18.95).*
Ten Texas forts that were established to ward off Indians during the move West are brought to life in this book of paintings and historical vignettes. The wide porches and palm trees of Fort McIntosh, the picket houses of Fort Richardson, the brick chapel at Fort Davis, and structures of other posts are beautifully depicted in full-page watercolors that evoke the history and mood of each site.

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**California: The Golden State** *text by Peter Jensen, photog. by West Light (Boulton Publishing Services, Inc., Toronto, 1985; 112 pp., illus., $17.50).*
The natural beauty, culture, sporting events, and architecture of the Golden State are captured by several Western photographers in this California picture book. Presented with informative captions are 104 plates depicting many scenes: from orange poppy fields to Silicon Valley, from the girders of the Golden Gate Bridge to the granite walls of Yosemite, from Sleeping Beauty's Castle in Disneyland to the Hearst Castle, from the San Francisco skyline to the fireworks over the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

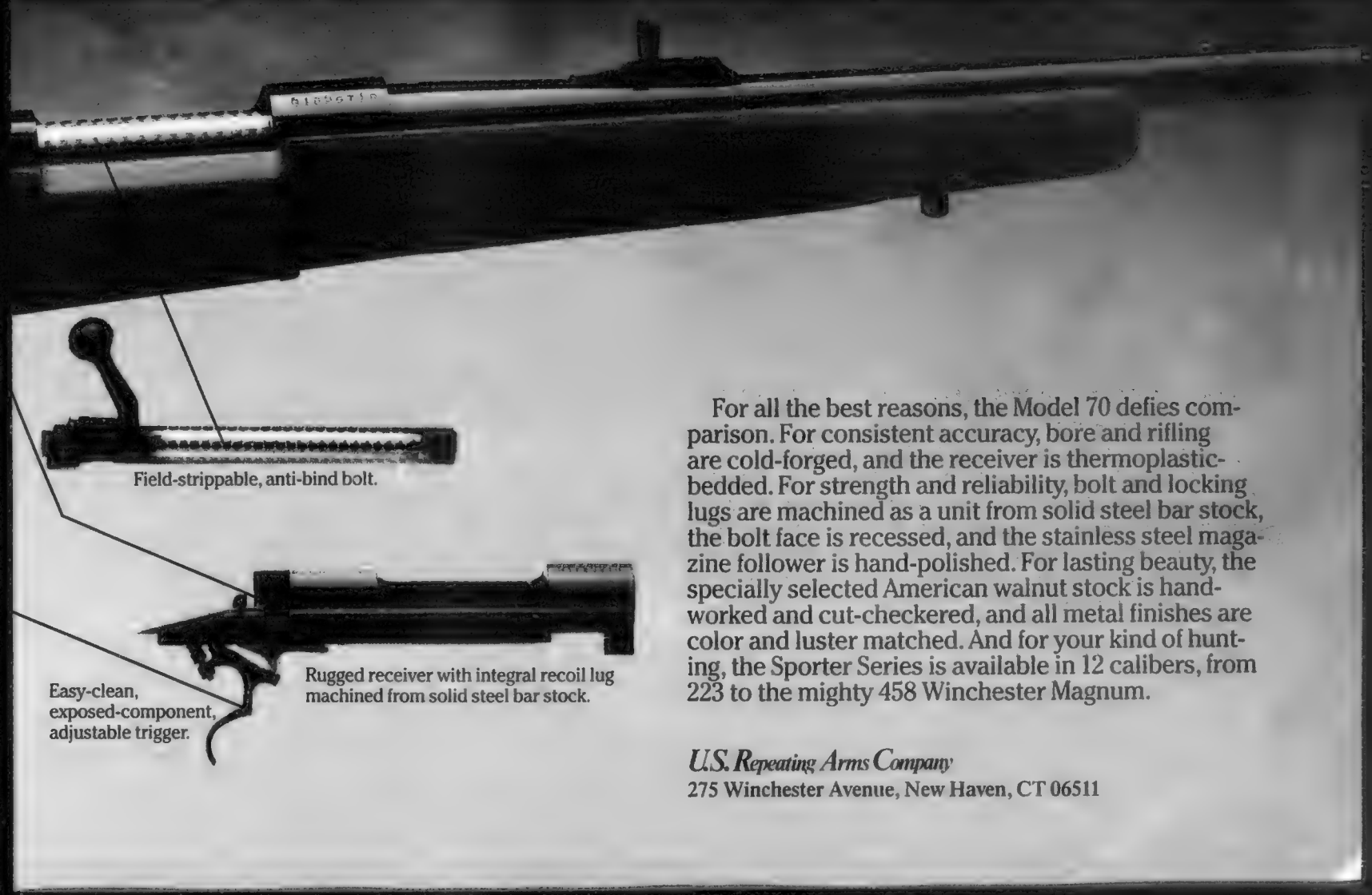
**Dances of the Tewa Pueblo Indians: Expressions of New Life** *by Jill D. Sweet (School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1985; 110 pp., illus., biblio., index, paper $8.95).*
The colorful dances of the Tewa Pueblo Indians are full of symbolism and tradition. Costumes, songs, and meanings of these rituals are simply explained in this introduction to the Tewa culture. The book is illustrated with vivid color photographs, and offers a guide to identifying Tewa dances that tells observers what to look for when watching a performance.

**In the Deep Heart's Core: Reflections on Life, Letters, and Texas** *by Craig Edward Clifford (Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1985; 145 pp., biblio., $13.95).*
In these ten entertaining essays, Houston-raised Craig Clifford considers what it means to be a Texan. He tackles the issue of whether Texas is Southern or Western (and concludes it's big enough to be both), ruminates on music and Willie Nelson, and considers how in this nuclear age we can use the traditionally Western spirit of rugged individualism to our country's—and the world's—best advantage.

**N. Scott Momaday: The Cultural and Literary Background** *by Matthias Schubnell (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1985; 344 pp., notes, biblio., index, $19.95).*
Southwestern author and artist N. Scott Momaday often draws upon his Kiowa heritage in his work. But too many critics allow Momaday's Kiowa background to dominate their evaluations, claims the writer of this literary biography. Other factors, he explains, were equally important in shaping the talents of the author who wrote the Pultizer Prize-winning novel *House Made of Dawn*. Momaday has wide interests, from the study of Isak Dinesen to a fascination with Billy the Kid. By taking a balanced approach, and drawing upon interviews, letters, and unpublished manuscripts, this insightful book puts Momaday's "Indianness" in a new perspective.

**Microwave Game & Fish Cookbook** *by Paula J. Del Giudice (Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1985; 192 pp., index, paper $12.95).*
Avid hunter, angler, writer, and cook, Paula Del Giudice doesn't often have time to slave over a hot stove. That's why she has developed 164 time-saving microwave recipes for wild game and fish. Collected here are simple, convenient ways to prepare small and big game, upland gamebirds, waterfowl, and fish—from Fantastic Elk Stroganoff to Tarragon Trout. Recipes for side dishes and tips on converting traditional recipes for use in the microwave are also included.

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**Pioneers, Sodbusters and Town Raisers**

**Q:** How did pioneers commonly make butter on the long trail westward?
**A:** Most emigrants herded at least one milk cow over the continent with them. Cow's milk, when poured into a bucket and hung under a jostling wagon, would be churned into butter by day's end.

**Q:** What violent act at the hands of Indians did railroad worker William Thompson survive?
**A:** In 1867, while taking a handcar through Indian country in Nebraska, Thompson was attacked and scalped by Cheyenne warriors, who thought they had killed him. He survived, found his discarded scalp on the prairie and walked back to civilization carrying it in a bucket of water, hoping it could be restored to his head—which it could not.

**Q:** What heroic act was performed by eleven-year-old Merton Eastlick during Minnesota's 1862 Santee Sioux Uprising?
**A:** After his father and three brothers were killed by the Sioux and his mother was taken prisoner, young Merton carried his baby brother approximately forty miles to safety, walking barefoot, hiding from Indians en route and keeping himself and his baby brother alive by picking and eating wild berries.

**Q:** What familiar euphemism originated with a Dodge City brothel?
**A:** Known for a front door made of red glass, which produced a rosy glow when lit at night, Dodge City's Red Light bordello lent its name to the cow town's brothel district and reportedly produced the term "red-light district."

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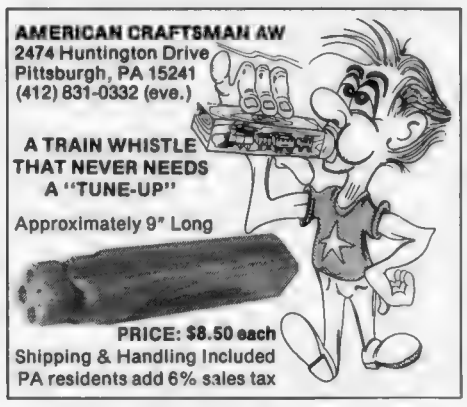


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| Double shell latches | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Double action bars | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| STEEL-to-STEEL LOCKUP | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Lightweight alloy receiver | yes | yes | no | no |
| Double extractors | yes | yes | no | no |
| 5 Round mag. (6 total) | yes | yes | no | no |
| Disconnecting trigger | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Firing pin block | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Rubber recoil pad | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Walnut stock/forend | yes | no | yes | no |
| Pistol grip cap | yes | no | yes | no |
| Free-floating wide V.R. | yes | yes | no | no |
| Extra wide V.R. | yes | no | no | no |
| Jewelled bolt/gold trigger | yes | no | no | no |
| Ambidextrous safety on top rear of receiver | yes | yes | no | no |
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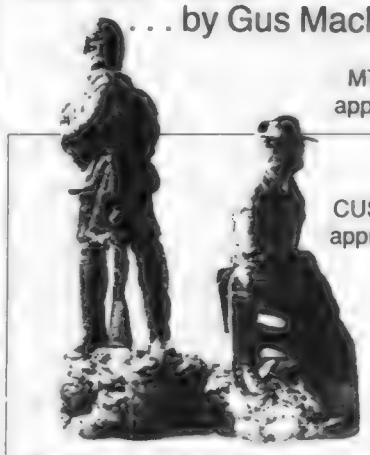

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# Western Art Notes

***SOURCES OF COUNTRY MUSIC* (1974–75)** COURTESY JOSLYN ART MUSEUM

## Thomas Hart Benton's Homage to the Heartland

Proponent of the midwest, painter Thomas Hart Benton depicted an American heartland populated by strong farmers and laborers. "Thomas Hart Benton: An Intimate View," an exhibit showing at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, July 12–August 24, traces the development of Benton's artistic style, from his early years to the full bloom of his talent.

Benton had his roots in the midwest, born in Neosho, Missouri, in 1889. He left to study at the Art Institute of Chicago and abroad in Paris, then settled in New York to begin his career as an artist. After serving as a draftsman in the Navy in World War I, Benton found his calling in realism.

After the war he worked as a teacher at the Art Students League in New York and traveled extensively throughout the country, sketching the men and women of the country's breadbasket. Together with fellow painters Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry, he led the regionalist movement, devoting his art to American subjects, especially rural ones. Benton became disenchanted with the East Coast art establishment after twenty years in New York City and returned to Missouri.

The forty-one paintings and thirty-two drawings in the exhibit reveal Benton's growing tendency toward strong, linear compositions, coupled with swirling patterns like those found in his study for a mural, *Sources of Country Music* (1974–75), completed during the year of his death. In his easel paintings and his murals, Benton extolled the qualities he admired most in the American people—strength, independence, and a certain nobility.

**The Third Western States Exhibition** showcases the paintings, sculpture, and photographs of forty-five of the best contemporary artists working in the western United States. Coordinated by the Western States Arts Foundation and curated by the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the exhibit features two to three works by each of the artists in an effort to increase their exposure and attract critical attention. The pieces were first selected from 4,500 slides sent in by recommended artists and then culled by exhibit curator Charlotta Kotik as she traveled the West visiting entrants. Chosen works include "Diptych," a silver gelatin and cibachrome print by Culver City, California, photographer Eileen Cowin; papier-mache animal trophy heads covered with intricate, iridescent beadwork by Sherry Markowitz of Seattle, Washington; and "Human Conditions #1," a somber, mixed-media canvas by painter Jose Luis Rodríguez of Boise, Idaho. The show opens June 6 at the

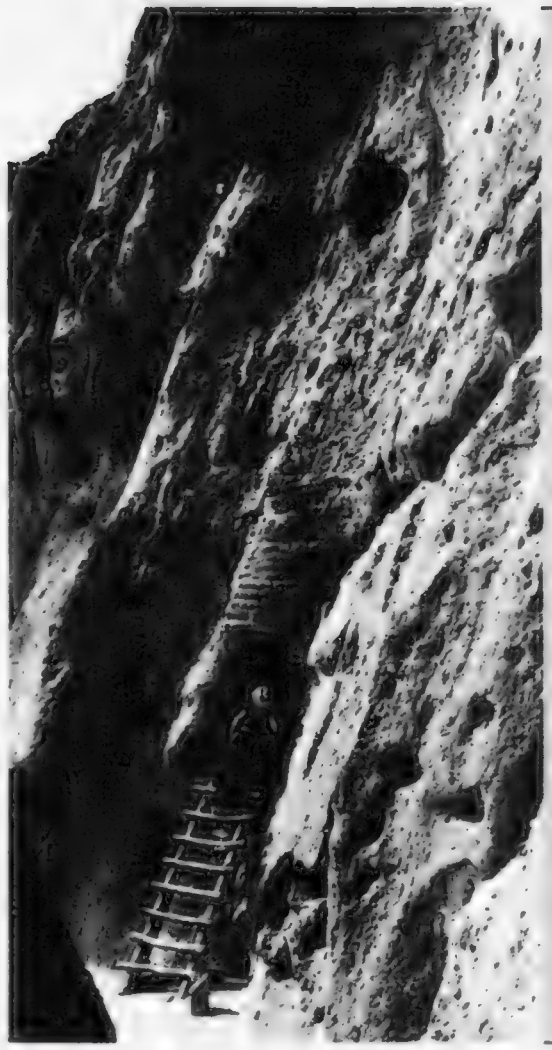
Brooklyn Museum, traveling to sites across the country for the next two years after August 5.

**Russian emigré Nicolai Fechin** moved to the American West in 1927 and set about capturing the people and the land in his distinctive open-brushwork paintings and masterful line drawings. An ongoing exhibit at the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, "The Works of Nicolai Fechin," showcases Fechin's exceptional talent through eighteen paintings, three charcoal drawings, and three sculptures, one in wood and two in bronze. Twelve of the paintings are portraits, among them a post-1948 *Self Portrait* and the impressionistic *Summer*, depicting his wife and daughter. Four landscapes and two still lifes comprise the rest of the works, on loan from the collection of the Robert S. and Grayce B. Kerr Foundation, Inc.

**American Drawings and Watercolors** in the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute" is a collection of more than eighty pieces by American artists over a 200-year period. The works include an early nineteenth century pastel drawing by Benjamin West and the 1888 *Texas Type* by Frederic Remington. The exhibit runs July 1—October 5 at the Huntington Library Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California.

**The faces of ruddy coal miners,** Indians, businessmen, and turn-of-the-century dandies were captured by southern Colorado portrait photographer Oliver Aultman. "Faces of Trinidad: Photographs from the Aultman Collection" chronicles the history of the area from 1889 to recent times, based on the work of Aultman, whose son Greg still operates the original studio in Trinidad. Aultman employed solar printing, toning with gold, for many of the vintage portraits displayed. Several of Aultman's cameras, along with chairs that subjects used at the Aultman studio, accompany the show, which is on view through August 24 at El Pueblo Museum, Pueblo, Colorado.

**Images of a less familiar** Colorado adorn the canvasses of Lamar, Colorado, native Dan Coen, whose "Lamar Series" of fifteen giant (6′ x 8′ — 7′ x 10′) airbrushed acrylics depicts rural scenes and landscapes of the eastern Colorado plains in a photo-realist style. Coen's paintings of horses, Yorkshire pigs, and sweeping panoramas show June 22—August 3 at the Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

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# Major Sibley's Handy Stove

Nineteenth century soldiers on winter campaigns had reason to thank Major Henry H. Sibley as they huddled in canvas tents around the radiant warmth of Sibley stoves like the one pictured here. This Sibley stove, minus the stovepipe, was found in 1965 along what was once known as Crook's Trail, named for General George Crook, who established a route between Fort Apache and Fort Verde along the Mogollon Rim in eastern Arizona. The stove was most likely used during one of Crook's campaigns against the Apache in the 1870s and 1880s. Because it was forged and riveted by hand, this stove can be distinguished from later machine-made models that were issued during the 1930s to the Civilian Conservation Corps and the U. S. Forestry Service.

Perhaps tired of waking up with freezing hands and feet, in the mid-1850s Sibley devised a bottomless stove out of sheet metal wrapped in the form of a cone and paired it with a wigwam-shaped canvas tent. The handmade stoves could also be placed under a tripod and used for cooking. A square door was cut in the side for adding fuel, and a small opening at the base allowed a draft to regulate the fire. The handy tent warmer came in three sizes: eighteen, twenty-five, and thirty pounds.

Sibley patented his device in 1857, and the War Department agreed to pay him a five-dollar royalty on each tent-and-stove unit. Unfortunately for Sibley, his income from royalties was short-lived. In 1861 he resigned his commission with the United States Army and joined the Confederacy. Sibley would have made quite a tidy sum if his sympathies had lain with the North, as his stoves were widely used in campaigns against Indians.

Travelers can retrace part of General Crook's Trail today. Four miles south of the town of Show Low along U.S. Highway 60, take the west exit to Mogollon Rim Road, which was once Crook's Trail, and head west toward Fort Verde. The Mogollon Rim country offers spectacular views of great scenic beauty. Portions of Crook's Trail are paved over by highways.

Sibley stoves are scarce today. Few people collected the major's sturdy invention, perhaps because it lacked any ornamentation or because they simply didn't recognize the cone-shaped artifact. Sharp-eyed Western Lore contributor Connie Kutac, of Farmington, New Mexico, discovered this Sibley stove.

AMERICAN WEST offers twenty-five dollars to any reader whose suggestion is accepted for publication in Western Lore. We seek information (with relevant pictures, if possible) about unusual artifacts, unusual and little-known happenings, unusual and little-known people, as well as little-known facts about well-known people—all in Western history. What do you have? Space is limited; so, we have to be selective. We'll take good care of your pictures and return them promptly. Be sure to pack pictures carefully and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return. Send submissions to AMERICAN WEST, Western Lore, 3033 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719.

## Coming soon in American West

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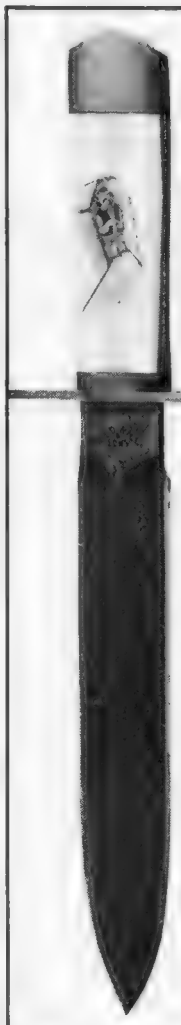
Our reporter talks with **Louis L'Amour** to explore the reasons behind the tremendous popularity of his Western stories.

We'll bring you some beautiful and little-known paintings by the great artist-naturalist **John James Audubon**—not of birds, but of **quadrupeds** in North America.

In 1934 "The Great Colorado River War" pitted Arizona against California and the federal government. We'll tell you about the battles that ensued—sometimes ridiculous maneuvers over the life-and-death issue of Colorado River water.

In the September/October edition, our **Travel Calendar** brings word of autumn and winter events for all you energetic Westerners.

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# Western Snapshots Today

A testimony to the hard times befalling many midwestern farms, this ramshackle farmhouse stands in Hitchcock County, Nebraska, two miles west of Trenton. The surrounding land is still being worked, although the house was abandoned several years ago. The farm has belonged to the Curran family for nearly 100 years. Photographed in early winter, the tree behind the house is alive, but the barren stump in the front yard is a sad reminder of the grove of lovely elm trees that once encircled the house and nearby Elm Creek. The trees fell victim to Dutch elm disease, which swept through Hitchcock County in the late 1960s.

A section worker on the local railroad, Thomas Curran, purchased the farm in 1889. He obtained approximately 159 acres through a preemption patent issued by President Grover Cleveland. At the rate of $1.25 an acre, Curran paid a grand total of $198.43. Curran and his wife, Ella, let the land lie idle for a while, living in a section house in Trenton. After Della, their first child, was born, the Currans moved out to their farm. Curran then commuted to his railroad job as second section boss by horseback.

The Currans' son Cloyd later inherited the farm from his mother, Ella. He and his wife, Marie, moved to the farm in 1921 and worked it until shortly after the flood of 1935. This flood swept through the Republican Valley, devastating low-lying farms and homes. In dire financial straits during the Depression, the Currans decided Marie should seek employment in Trenton, where she worked in various grocery stores. Cloyd's attempt to get a job with the Works Progress Administration failed, and soon he too was forced to find work in town. He and Marie moved to Trenton, where he ran a filling station which now adjoins the Hitchcock County Museum.

Marie Curran still owns the farm and until recently leased the house to relatives. Farmhouses like this are a common sight throughout neighboring counties and states, examples of the ongoing demise of the family farm.

David Mefford has photographed many such farms during Sunday outings near his home in McCook, Nebraska. He used a Nikon EM camera with a 50mm lens to capture this Western Snapshot Today, printing it on Polycontrast Rapid II paper.

AMERICAN WEST offers twenty-five dollars to any photographer, amateur or professional, whose Western Snapshot Today is selected for publication on this page. Pictures portraying today's West—the land and its people—in black-and-white or color, will be accepted for consideration. Please specify the type of camera, lens, film, paper, and techniques as well as light conditions used to obtain your photograph. Prints will be handled with care and returned promptly after use. Be sure to pack the snapshots carefully and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send submissions to AMERICAN WEST, Western Snapshots Today, 3033 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719.

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# Western Snapshots Yesterday

S. L. Palmer and his wife Elizabeth met in 1875 when she was studying music at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and he was touring the East with John Philip Sousa's band. After they were married, he put his coronet away for a while and became a telegraph operator for the railroad in Illinois. Later the couple moved to Kansas and took up farming. They had four children—all of whom were taught to play musical instruments. It was said of Palmer that he owned a farm but the farm in no sense owned him.

Palmer became interested in archeology after a trip to the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, and decided that travel would be the only way to satisfy his longing to make an archeological find. He began extensive traveling through the Southwest in the 1890s. Each year he would close up the farm, and each year the trips seemed to lengthen.

Palmer always took his wife and children along on these excursions. To make their travels as comfortable as possible, he ingeniously constructed a home on the running gear of a conventional horse-drawn Studebaker wagon. The body was built out over the wheels with two seats running lengthwise along each side. Cabinets inside from top to bottom were used for storing clothing, bedding, cooking utensils, and supplies. Barrels for extra water could be secured to the outside.

Above the storage area in the back, just under the roof, glass-doored cases lined with plush blue fabric held the family's musical instruments. Along the way, the Palmers would meet expenses by performing concerts and shows for the people they met.

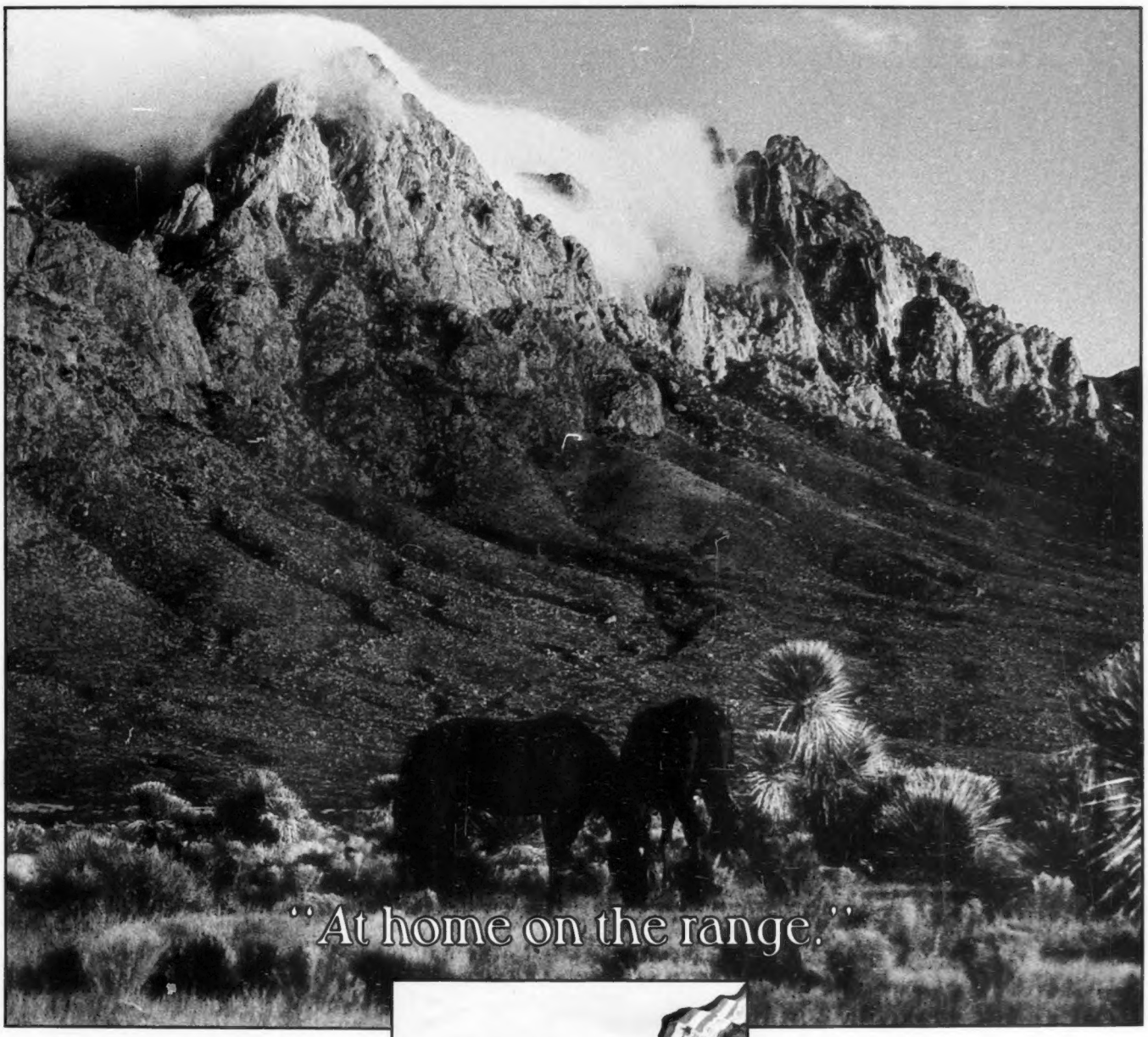
One of those people was Richard Wetherill, discoverer of the Colorado Mesa Verde Indian ruins. In the fall of 1895, Wetherill agreed to serve as the Palmers's guide on an expedition to Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. There the family camped in their rustic "mobile home," while Palmer and Wetherill worked together on archeological digs, acquiring numerous Indian relics.

The next year, Palmer's nineteen-year-old daughter, Marietta, married Richard Wetherill. Together they raised a family in New Mexico until Wetherill was tragically killed by a Navajo in a dispute provoked by one of Wetherill's ranch hands.

The last trip the Palmers made by covered wagon was in 1898. Palmer upgraded his family's mode of transportation when he built a forerunner of the modern RV body on the stripped chassis of a Model T Ford. The vehicle featured a bed, cabinets, and even a toilet under the driver's seat. Later he designed a larger,improved camper on a Hudson chassis, and he and his wife continued to tour the country in style.

This photo of the mobile home that S. L. Palmer built on a horse-drawn Studebaker wagon was sent to us by his grandson, Gaylord Palmer, of San Antonio, Texas.

AMERICAN WEST offers twenty-five dollars to any reader whose Western Snapshot Yesterday is accepted for publication on this page. We seek old photographs that tell stories of bygone times. Especially welcome are pictures depicting some forgotten aspect of Western life, serious or amusing. Space is limited; so, we have to be selective. We'll take good care of your pictures and return them promptly. Be sure to pack the snapshots carefully and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send submissions to AMERICAN WEST, Western Snapshots Yesterday, 3033 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719.



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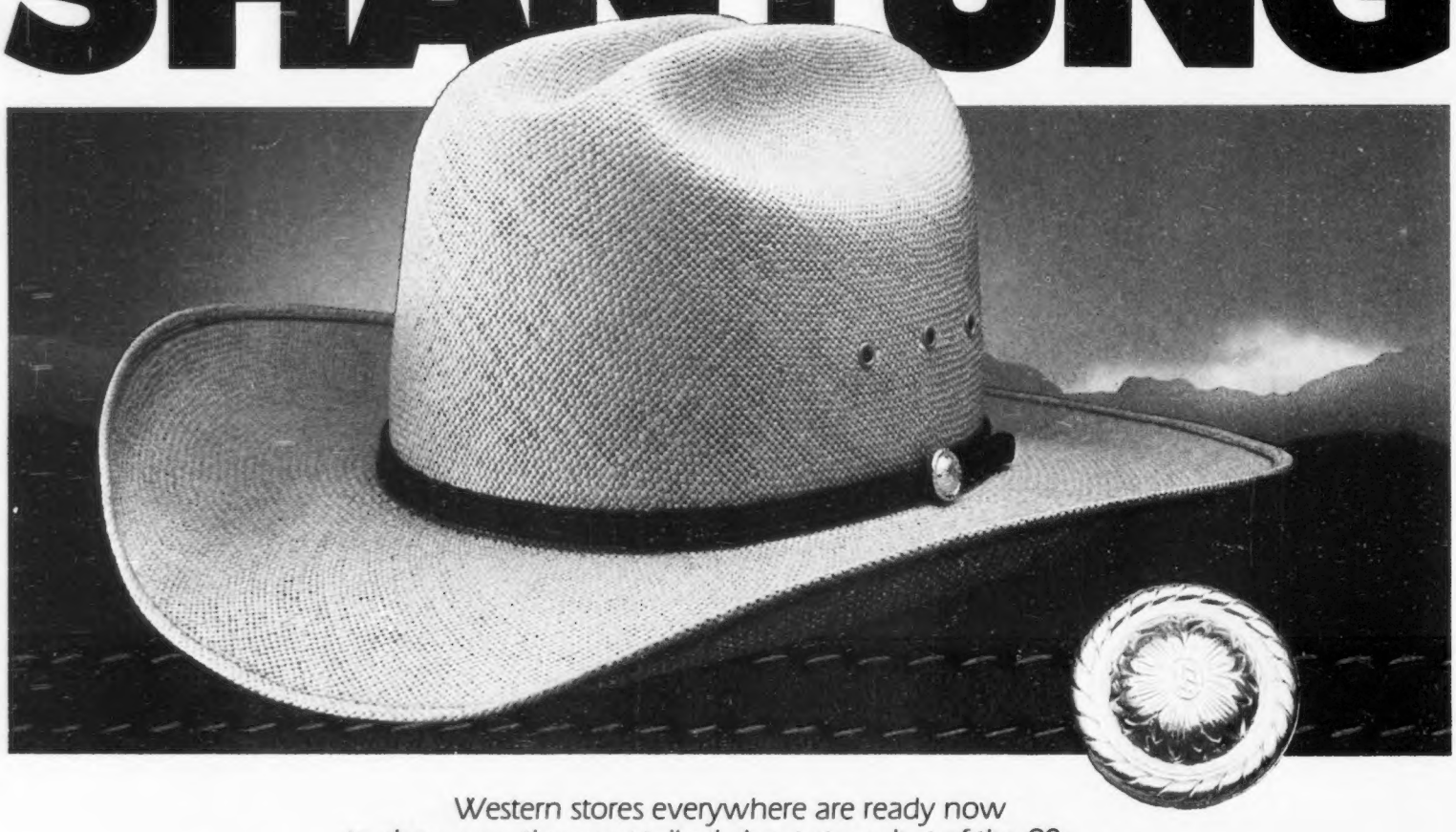

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